

REFORMS
&
SOCIAL REVOLUTION



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INTRODUCTION

From Parliamentarism to Syndicalism

In recent times, some socialists have made some considerable efforts to give to the materialistic theory of history a conservative character. After all, it can be said than to all the theories that adhere to the so-called moral sciences have happened to be used indifferently to the advantage of the most varied trends practices that move in society. The Hegelian doctrine concerning the rationality of all that exists and the reality of all that is rational, for example, has long served the reactionaries to demonstrate the absurdity of the reformers and revolutionaries, and the latter the inconclusiveness of first. If indeed what it is real is also rational, the present political and moral order of society is fully justified; and the revolutionaries, rising up against it, rise up against reason and human nature. But if all that is rational is also real, every abstract doctrine, true before the court of reason, has the right to enter the category of practical realities and therefore to overturn the order of existing things.

In historical materialism, as in the Hegelian dialectic itself, there is a conservative side and a revolutionary side. The conservative side consists in the justification of the present social order, thanks to the assumption of the existence of the forces that ensure its strength and development. On its trunk can vegetate that gross positivism of practical reason, which condemns with the greatest indignation any attempt aimed at changing a social order, which is justified by the simple and pure fact of one's existence. Moreover, with the assertion of the vanity of every revolutionary effort when the conditions for the social transition from one to another superior form are lacking, he provides the clause of irony with the concerned condemnations of conservatism disguised against the historical anticipations of the victims or the rebels. Of course, this conservative

materialism, even if it often bears the name socialist (indeed it is the ornament that pre-diliges it), is careful not to indicate any means of recognizing when the "conditions" of revolutionary passing exist and when not; without which the conservative nature of the system would not be evident.

The most dangerous side of this trend for the future of humanity consists in arousing the confidence that the process of social becoming is automatic and irresistible and that it spontaneously overcomes all the obstacles placed in the way of interest, greed or ignorance. Practically speaking, it is resolved in the advice to renounce any predisposed and voluntary influence on the social organization and to the plan to oppose the attempts of the conservative classes and parties. In a German socialist review W. Kolb wrote thus: "We abandon ourselves to the organic development of things. This organic development we try in every way to influence and accelerate. Our valid tactic is Evolution carried into theory. From this fact we must fearlessly draw the consequences in order to remove the contrast that exists today between our tactics and the catastrophic theory. *Hic Rodus, Hic salta*. This is the point around which the whole dispute turns". Trust "in the organic development of things" implies the renunciation of any revolutionary action. Undressed of its Teutonic mists: it means socialism is self-made. In fact, another German socialist writer does not fail to draw from these premises all the consequences that they allow. He even goes so far as to advise the renunciation of every action in the event that governments and conservative parties deprive workers of the few freedoms they have. Hear a little how David speaks:

"But if by chance, on the peaceful path that leads the proletariat to power, we collide with men of fact, we try to oppress ourselves with repressive measures and we push ourselves into the decisive struggle: what should we do? We should respond to illegality with legality, to violence with placidity. This is the only way to break the violence, the only way out against bayonets. We must take care that the full weight of moral condemnation falls on those who make an attempt to

violently prevent the initiated civilizer of social democracy. It is called bringing water to the mill of the men of the gallows, considering the possibility of another attitude."

Now this filthy and repugnant tactic of cowardice that one would like to recommend to the proletariat derives precisely from that macaronic interpretation of the law of variation of societies that is claimed to derive from historical materialism. In fact, Vliegen pompously affirms: "the victory of socialism is a process of economic evolution" and adds with sententious brevity that governments can do little about it and proletarians can do much harm with acts of revolt. Hence the practical consequence is to close the arms on the chest and abandon oneself to divine providence. But since after Adam's sin man was condemned to perpetual labor, these good socialists advise and propose electoral holding to idle proletarians.

There are, however, other socialists who are willing to take electoral action in a much more serious sense. And they too attack their intellectual miseries on the nail of historical materialism, which has recently become the most prodigious and fruitful pretext for theoretical blunders and practical opportunisms. As in historical materialism there is a theory of the passage from the condition to the conditioned, they deduce that socialism presupposes a series of already formed institutions, among which the workers live, and they propose with their parliamentary activity to give life to conditions that can prepare the triumph of the working classes. And since the desire for a quiet life, personal vanity and the interests of the proletariat seemed admirably in common on the electoral and parliamentary grounds, the most admirable and gracious infatuation with the use of electoral means that classes or parties have ever experienced was born. Thus arose all kinds of practical, positive and right-thinking socialism that one can imagine. Indeed, because the humorists of the bourgeois and anarchist parties were not lacking in material, this race of flatly electoral socialism exhibited around its neutral beauties under the name of "scientific socialism"! After all, tooth pulling has also become a

matter of science. And in Italy there is perhaps no "Scientific police magazine".

It is very difficult to imagine how an essentially bourgeois system, due to its nature, history and derivation, such as parliamentarism, can become an instrument of liberation for the proletariat.

The parliamentary system is the reflection and the natural condition of existence of a political society in which there is no economic homogeneity, whose members, that is, have economic or non-converging or even conflicting interests. Bourgeois society is formed in such a way that the individual components of the bourgeois class find themselves in a state of natural competition with each other. The only common interests that the members of this class have relate to the maintenance and security of their respective initial positions, that is, public order and private property. This class has found itself since its first appearance in history having to solve the problem of seeking such an organization of political powers, so that the state was prevented from granting privileges and making its strength weigh on one side rather than the other. . The parliamentary system, allowing a strict and severe control, first of public spending, then of all state influences and actions, is certainly the best solution of the historical problem facing the bourgeoisie. Through him it has been possible to implement that relative neutrality of the state in the conflicts that take place between members of the same ruling class and sometimes also between members of the ruling class and the dominated class, for which the law on which bourgeois society rests, that is competition has been able to assert its full effectiveness. This system of state neutrality, implemented through the balance of parties, which in a certain way - but often very indirectly and sideways and sometimes even not at all - represent classes or class fractions, where it is closest to perfection, gave rise to democracy, that is, to a political system that considers all citizens equally, regardless of their initial economic positions, and therefore, on the basis of political equality, rigorously maintains all the social inequalities that

among citizens exist. A society whose members do not have homogeneous interests must spontaneously assume the political aspect of a parliamentary society. After all, the whole history is, it can be said, an experimental proof of the thesis that the bourgeoisie has precisely seen in the parliamentary system the congruous and adequate form of its political government. All the *cahiers* of the third estate on the eve of the French revolution, almost without exception, proclaim that the law must be the expression of the general will, that there is really no law except when the nation has decided, and that the nation must make known the his will by means of elective, periodic and deliberative assemblies with perfect freedom, apart from any attack by royal arbitrariness and military force. Now if the parliamentary regime arises spontaneously everywhere among the dominant social groups there is no homogeneity of interests, as happened in England between the nobility and the Crown, but it must be remembered that the bourgeois class is naturally and ordinarily in such conditions, and therefore the parliamentary regime is, so to speak, an essential and inevitable form of its domination.

It is therefore logical that the proletariat, which is also interested in excluding the partisan and particularist influence of the state, benefits from the parliamentary regime, participates in its life and contributes to ensuring its proper functioning. But it would also be logical for the proletariat to ask him no more than he can give and not to pretend to give him offices that are contrary to his nature and history.

Parliaments are not and cannot become the organ of a social revolution. From the formal point of view - at most - they just take note of it). Furthermore, the mechanism of their functioning seems to exclude the possibility that a class or a party could win a certain majority in them, to the exclusion of all the others. It is said that the proletariat is the great majority of the population. It may be true, although some flaws have to be made. Experience will show that the Socialist Party will sooner or later have to renounce the following of both public and private

employees; and no one has ever considered that the numerous classes employed in domestic services and the plebs of the big cities can be amalgamated in the socialist party. A large part of the non-proprietary agricultural population has no interest in promoting or actively participating in the socialist revolution. Many agrarian pacts (for example: sharecropping) create a real form of co-interest between owner and worker. Naturally all these classes will also feel the benefits of the socialist revolution and it would be childish fear to fear that they might tomorrow constitute a reactionary mass, interested in destroying the order of things founded on the principles of socialism. But, today, it is foolhardy to assume that they have a collective interest in *promoting* the social revolution. Furthermore, the close relationships that form between them and the members of the capitalist class develop in them feelings of at least personal attachment to their masters. Even today it happens that in constituencies and colleges composed mainly of workers and where there has been widespread propaganda of socialism, a local industrialist is elected. Corruption, personal attachment, the qualities of candidates, religious sentiments and the education of voters often balance the pure attractive virtue of political theories. For my part I do not hesitate to consider it as the most ridiculous and absurd of utopias that the Socialist Party could ever succeed and in any country in the world to obtain a parliamentary majority. The least that can happen to him before that moment is to split into a whole range of parties.

All this assuming an impossible condition, that is, that the bourgeoisie let it be done and placidly let itself be stripped of its political preponderance. I don't think the bourgeoisie will ever need to suppress the political vote. The parliamentary system, being a condition of life of the bourgeois regiment, will last as long as the government of the bourgeoisie lasts. Only in politically very backward countries and in which the sentiment of public liberties is underdeveloped, such as Germany, will there be some momentary surprises, of which not so much the bourgeoisie, which in Germany governs at all, takes the initiative,

but the restricted and decayed noble class or the Court. But perhaps the parliamentary system will emerge from this predictable parenthesis and Germany will also accept the political model of the more Western countries. And who can tell us what marvelous historical novelties could derive from the change in the internal political conditions of Russia, in which everything suggests that the political revolution will only be able to prevail in a truly democratic and typically radical form? Cases that have occurred all over the world - in the most autocratic countries, as in the most democratic countries, from Russia to the United States - now persuade the truth that the repression of uprisings that compromise either the existence of bourgeois society, or even just some of its rights class, it can be done easily without undermining the so-called general freedoms of citizens. Which is an indirect but very successful proof of the truth that there is no middle-to-end relationship between democracy and socialism. The most democratic and free regimes in the world provide for the maintenance of the capitalist order with no less effectiveness than illiberal or autocratic regimes.

Democracy lacks a hold on the specific process of social life. Its characteristic is incompetence. When Spencer observes that parliamentarians are generally ignorant, he does not point out a defect, but a condition of existence of democratic regimes. These must provide, so to speak, for the very general conditions of existence of citizens. Ensure the general protection of all rights and all situations: democratic regimes must do nothing else. It is up to the genius of spontaneous social creations to tie or untie relationships of a more intimate nature between citizens. Whenever a parliament or a democracy wanted to give life to some economic organism, they had to abdicate their powers in the hands of technical commissions and create special administrative bodies. The bad success of many public enterprises derives from the organic incompetence of their founders. Now the social revolution, which will have to lead to the *autonomous government of production by the associated working class*, in which socialism consists, is above all a

technical and economic fact, which cannot be decreed by an assembly of incompetents, but must result from the autonomous development of skills and from the spontaneous initiatives of those who attend to the production process. A technical and economic transformation of production with all the consequent social transformations decreed by a parliament of lawyers, doctors, pedicurists, storytellers, poets and ... economists is the craziest idea that can jump into the human head.

And it gets better. Every social revolution, when it fails to make a caricature, creates its own adequate organs. Where the bourgeoisie truly secured political domination, it gave birth to parliamentary democracy. But where there is no parliamentary democracy, it can also be said that the bourgeoisie had to resort to a compromise with the old society. The use in general of the old powers of society to carry out its transformation is of great prejudice to the transformation itself. In such a case, society only reforms itself by means of or does not reform at all. Experience shows that the use of existing legal devices to reform a society almost always works out to the advantage of the classes or institutions one would like to reform. Later we will see that reform is a synonym of preserving, when it supposes respect for the existing legal organization. The revolutionary instinct induces all classes in conflict with a dominant social group to use an organization or a social mechanism of their own within the official one of society. Even before the doctors of socialism were born, the proletariat had fashioned itself into the trade organization (trade union) as the instrument of its own revolution.

But at one point a strange eclipse intervened in the workers' movement. The union appeared to be a secondary body in the face of parliamentary action. The penetration into the bourgeois state and the pursuit of the legal majority were considered the equivalents of socialism. The bourgeois state was elevated to the redeemer of the proletarian class. That long and never disproved historical tradition, according to which the use of existing power for the purposes of social transformation

turned out to be illusory or harmful, almost always producing the consolidation of the class that it wanted to dispossess, was completely forgotten. Socialist reformism forgot that it had a whole series of ancestors in bourgeois reformism. Instead of learning the lesson from the latter, he preached to the proletariat as a new truth, what was the reproduction of a very old error.

And yet the bourgeoisie understood the value of the reform movement. As long as the working classes, forgetting the natural needs of every revolutionary movement, instead of considering the trade union as the specific organ of their own revolution, weapons, at once, of attack and defense, base their hopes on the results of the political suffrage, the bourgeoisie sleeps very soundly. That is not where the danger comes from. In the unlikely hypothesis that a majority of socialists arrived at the legislating assemblies, the technical device of the latter would force them to break up into a dust of jealous and rival parties, divided on the ends and means of the program they would claim to carry out. An obscure sense of this truth seems to penetrate the minds of the most decidedly electionist socialists. In the aftermath of the famous victory of three million votes, the German socialists, for whom the parliamentary infatuation is justified at least by the lack of a real parliamentary regime in their country, seemed terrified of their own victory. What will happen now, they wondered? Will the coup d'état come, the abolition of suffrage, the return to pure absolutism? And finally, a certain irony is not lacking that a party which aims to achieve the total emancipation of the proletariat through the use of the existing legal devices, is reduced to worry about the possible loss of legal ground, rather than the means to exploit widely. your own victory.

To entrust oneself, as so many do, to the natural course of economic evolution, which would necessarily give birth to socialism, is to play miserably with one's own powerlessness. If the doctrine of historical materialism really suggested this advice, the fallacy of that doctrine would be definitively proved. But it is precisely a revolutionary doctrine, because it confirms the

teaching that history is a product of the conditioned will of men, of their conscious efforts limited and circumscribed by existing reality, of the passions and appetites of men formed according to the nature of the environment. physical and social environment that surrounds them. Its dominant principle is that men are the agents of their own history (Vico). As these men are, with their passions, with their instincts, with the ideas they have learned, with the education they have undergone, such will be the story of their actions, indeed such will be the practical action that they will carry out in life. No doctrine gives so much importance to idealistic forces as does the doctrine of historical materialism, because precisely it considers history as a permanent flux and becoming, that is, as the unpredictable result of the conscious, but opposed, effort of men aimed at permanently getting out of conditions in the which ones are found. It considers men as underlying a permanent revolutionary education, which, by fixing and automating itself, generates in them the constant need to overcome the conditions in which they find themselves and to subsequently realize that idea of life that they propose. But it implicitly admits that men subjected to a persistent anti-revolutionary education are more or less unconsciously led to preserve the conditions of things in which they find themselves. What more anti-revolutionary education than that which advises men to renounce any conscious and voluntary pressure, any premeditated anticipation of present reality, any individual effort on the existing social structure?

History is a permanent becoming, of which the immediate spring is the will and the feelings of men, because the conditions of the social environment represent the inert matter and the limiting power of the individual and collective genius of variation. The form and the way by which such a power of variation is produced is determined by the relationships which men encounter in the course of their social life. Feelings, passions and instincts are, positively or negatively, produced by the social organism in which we live. Hence the great importance that the life of the institutes in the midst of which they develop

has for men. The life of the worker flows between two poles: the factory and the union. There the psychology and the ideology of the working world are immediately derived from the observation of these two institutes. The factory is in a certain way the present reality; the union the reality to come. The factory represents the productive association; the union is the ideal rule of juridical attribution of the product. The ideal of the workers' world is an economic society organized purely and simply in view of material production, and in which any hierarchy that does not have a purely technical value has disappeared, that is, a society without a state, without prisons, without armies, without laws, but no less fervently organized on the basis of economic needs, the consensual bond and the technical discipline of production.

The workers must struggle to impose on the world the egalitarian juridical rule that derives from the necessity of union life, or rather that way of life which is essentially union, that is, the purely consensual organization of men on the basis of their own technical office in economic production. To this type of *trade union organization*, bourgeois society contrasts the *political organization* of men, that is, their subordination to an organ extraneous to the immediate civil society, which is the state. It is enough just to reflect on this contrast to understand the truth of Sorel's assumption that the struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat can very well be imagined and in fact develops as a struggle between the political power of bourgeois society, which is the state, and the organization, technical-economic of the working men, which is the Trade Union. The attainment of the specific socialist and proletarian ideal of life presupposes the decline and decomposition of all political power and of any other form of organization of men that is not economic, that is, the subsequent and gradual elision of the state.

From parliamentarism to trade unionism: this is the watchword of the renewed labor movement. From the utopia of reforms, achieved through parliamentary agreement and compromises, to the reality of the revolution pursued with the

methodical extension of trade union action and with the subsequent elimination of all state influence and way of life. From the use of the political devices of democracy to the specific tools of the workers' organization. The workers do not ask the elective assemblies if not a simple means of controlling state action and a specula of observation of the moves of the bourgeois parties, a means of control and specula of observation which they could not renounce without their grave damage. They entrust and carry out the real revolutionary work through their trade unions, which must lose the character of pure corporatist organs of the organized workers in view of the exploitation of market conditions, to become organs of all the interests of the class. workers, contingents and generals, near and far.

But to achieve this, the working class must be capable of a great deal of effort. It must be able to free itself from the many bourgeois protectors that have come upon it. It must be able to understand the true nature of the reform movement and resolutely separate itself from it. The reform movement is the latest political disguise that bourgeois conservatism has managed with some success to put on. Either the working class manages to throw it back into the bourgeois wardrobe, or it will be suffocated by it. This is the dilemma.

CHAPTER ONE

The Revolutionary Process

In his monograph on the philosophical and sociological foundations of Marxism, Masaryk rightly observes that "on the problem of the Revolution, in general, one does not reflect, at least openly, how long it would take for it to be done". There is no need to deal here with the practical drawbacks which arise from this fact. Already in the introduction we noted some of the consequences of omitting any consideration of the need for revolutionary efforts in the workers' movement. Anyone who has dealt with dissolutive social forms will have had the ease of noting how a society, which does not know how to express from its own bosom the revolutionary forces that must strike the existing social forms, is previously condemned or to decay and corrupt, as happened to the Bourbon regime in southern Italy, or to succumb to the arrogance of a conqueror and yet to lose the essential conditions of its autonomous development, as happened to pagan society at the time of the barbarian invasions. Here we simply want to highlight the theoretical drawbacks that derive from the fact. We often hear about revolutionary methods and evolutionary methods applied to the development of human societies and to the succession of political forms. At the fact then they exchange with each other and it is not possible to indicate the main characteristics of one or the other. Political parties often dribble as an accusation to follow methods in contradiction with their assumptions from time to time. Ultimately, convenience and controversial opportunity powerfully help to increase Babel. From there arises a whole series of very candid misunderstandings and graceful word games, around the evolution that determines the revolution and the revolution that is conditioned by evolution. The socialists have also added a curious phraseology of their own, which they cannot understand

if not only the initiates. What, for example, is revolution "in the scientific sense" of the word?

Ferri often speaks of a revolutionary method which would then consist in pursuing a revolutionary goal, and he speaks of revolutionary ends as long as they are those that tend "to the radical change of the economic foundations of the social order". This phraseology is very common in the Italian Socialist Party. Parties, in general, are very attached to their own tradition even when it comes to the simple meaning of words. Now it must be remembered that the Italian Socialist Party was forced to form its ideology under the repeated blows of police persecution. In such situations it could seem very clever, and in fact it was very opportune, to allocate the revolutionism of the party, not in the means - the only ones that concern jurisprudence and the police - but in the theoretical ideas, by definition removed from the inquisition of the authorities. Later this genesis of the doctrine was forgotten and the expediency of changing the parts that no longer met any practical need was not understood. Well-thinking people came and found it very convenient to pass for essential concepts of socialism what had been mere defensive devices in a very stormy period.

Indeed, it does not seem serious to speak of revolutionary ends as opposed to non-revolutionary ends. Every social purpose, inasmuch as it is different from the actual present fact, is revolutionary, that is, it denies it. But of no end can it be said that it necessarily conditions the use of a specific means. Now revolution is a means, just as legislation is a means, just as persuasion or moral compulsion is a means. The revolution applies to certain ends in order to obtain their realization. It stands independently of the ends, which it can achieve or not. The ends, as such, are mere states of the soul, ideal tensions of the spirit, living logical prospects of pure interior life. The revolutionary method consists in using a certain mechanism for the attainment of any end. What we really need to do is to determine this mechanism, not the ideal that the mechanism aims to achieve. What matters is not the result, but the process;

not the product, but the tool. What then is this instrument that we call the revolution?

The question may also seem naive, and in part it is. Humanity has been making revolutions since the day the first human groupings were formed. The rule of this process was systematically the same. So how does it happen that we are still wondering what is a process that humanity has been following for centuries? This question may interest the psychologist. However, it should be considered that technology is the last to appear among all the sciences, and a general science of technology is still lacking. Our knowledge about the nature of some phenomena is quite exact and our cognitive material is sufficiently extensive, but the critique of knowledge is three-quarters filled with conjecture. We possess the formal technique of the cognitive process, which is logic, but we still do not know what the cognitive process itself consists of. Humanity has made and continues to make revolutions, but we continue to bounce back the problem: what is a revolution, and what does it mean to use a revolutionary procedure?

During the French Revolution, hundreds of people were killed for "anti-revolutionary attacks". Probably the accused and accusers, victims and executioners would have found themselves embarrassed to assign a precise meaning to the word "revolutionary". With their backs to the wall, both would end up saying that the revolution was the new order of things created on the ruins of the Bourbon monarchy. But at least in this case there was the resource of referring to a concrete case, to a fact that really happened and which, due to its materiality, made it possible to take a determined position in front of it. On the other hand, discussing in the abstract the question changes. How do you distinguish the revolutionary process from what is not? Is every denial of existing political orders a revolutionary fact? How to distinguish theoretical negation from practical negation?

I believe that the best is to study the *formal process of the revolution* in a concrete case, universally considered as classic: that of the French Revolution. It will be easy for us to discern in

what the process of the revolution consists, and therefore in what contemporaries made it consist at once: a) and revolutionary action, b) and the revolutionary spirit. Referring these teachings to all analogous cases, it will be possible to discern which traits characterize the *revolutionary method*. It will be evident, in fact, that we will be able to speak of a revolutionary method applied to social transformation as long as we see the reappearance of those known, those characteristics which in the specific case of a particular revolution seemed to constitute the essence of revolutionary measures. It is therefore a question of rediscovering the *logical nature* of the revolutionary fact, the general category of the spirit within which it can be placed. We consider this to be the only serious method for putting an end to the prevailing uncertainty in the use of the word "revolutionary".

In every revolution it is possible to clearly distinguish two periods; an early period in which what is signaled to attack is the old authority; a second in which it is a question of constituting the new authority. The first period embraces the complex of methods of destruction of the ancient regime. The old machine is dismantled piece by piece or immediately rendered useless and broken. The essential thing is that it can no longer be used. The first - and most important - part of the revolutionary process consists in rendering the old social organism powerless. The essential functions of life that are devolved to him must gradually or suddenly cease. Creating the paralysis of the old organism: this is the office of the revolutionary process; hitting the centers, to prevent their functions, this is the revolutionary artifice. - But the revolution does not stop at this point. On the rubble of the old power a new social constitution must arise. New groups of men must take over the reins. It is not enough. New functions must be formed. New organs must correspond to these new functions. This is the complementary period of the revolution and sometimes the longest. When the revolution stops at the first period, the revolution can be considered a failure. If the new power is not formed, it can happen that either the old power

reaffirms itself and resurrects or that society falls apart and falls apart. Classic, in this latter respect, is the example of pagan society on the eve of the barbarian invasions. What then happened in Germany in 1848 is the most evident example of that phenomenon of incomplete revolution, which stops at the first destructive phase without giving rise to the new formation and allowing more or less slowly the old power to reconstitute itself and recover the windward. Germany attempted in 1848 the revolution which France had carried out half a century earlier. It overthrows the absolute monarchy, strikes the feudal regiment, the still luxuriant leftovers of the servants, the antiquated system of the bureaucracy; but the new social power and the old absolutist monarchy, the old noble classes, the old bureaucracy, attempting a compromise with the spring bourgeois society, do not emerge from among the rising classes, regain power and have held it undisturbed ever since. - In France, on the other hand, the popular torment that overthrows the old institutions expresses from its own bosom the forces capable of dominating society. The Jacobin conquest and the revolutionary government brought to perfection the first destructive impetus of the masses, which had overthrown the old feudal society. The old power is broken and a new power arises. Political force passes from one social group to another. - But it's time to get out of generalities.

The revolution is an extraordinary event. It affects the mind with the multiplicity of its aspects. Whoever observes it now keeps his attention on one aspect of it, now on another. What is the revolution? It can be defined in a hundred thousand ways and each definition will always be incomplete while it can reflect a side of reality. Taine describes the state of France, the day after July 14: "not only had power, he says, escaped from the hands of the king, but it had not at all fallen into those of the assembly; it was on the ground, in the hands of the unleashed people, of the violent and overexcited crowd, of the equipments that picked it up like a weapon abandoned in the street. In fact, there was no longer a government; the whole edifice of human society was sinking; one reentered the state of nature. *It was not a*

revolution, but a dissolution". This is the most dramatic and most common aspect of any revolution. Society seems to be running out of steam. Each center of national life, formerly subordinate to the supreme power, regains its independence. The powers consecrated by tradition and law no longer exist. Where the new governing powers of society have not yet managed to conquer hegemony, the individual's will breaks in. The "people" dominate. The people ? What is the "people"? Taine replies: "the docking; one hundred, one thousand, ten thousand individuals gathered at random, on a motion, an alarm and later became, irresistibly, legislators, judges and executioners. Formidable destructive and vague power, on which no hand has taken hold and which with his mother, Liberty, sits on the threshold of revolution, like Milton's two ghosts at the gates of hell". This is the aspect of the revolution that is most frightening. They are the hundreds of insurrections that accompany the revolution. What do these uprisings represent? Clearly the series of processes spontaneously and at first glance put in place to strike traditional power, to immobilize its individual organs, to prevent its functioning.

Brissot exclaims in the *Patriote*: "there is a general insubordination in the provinces, because they no longer feel the restraint of the executive power. What other time were the springs? The stewards, the courts, the soldiers. The intendants have disappeared, the courts are mute, the soldiers are against the executive power". Necker notes the same side of the revolution when he exclaims: "everything is abandoned, everything is prey to individual passions". Taine highlights "the continuous anxiety, the profound malaise, the dull fever" in which the "evil" of the revolution consists. The jacquerie began in every part. Spontaneous anarchy erupts from all sides. Mallet-Dupan, whom Taine calls the most competent, the most judicious, the most profound observer of the revolution, exclaims: "The Huns, the Vandals and the Goths will come neither from the North, nor from the Black Sea: they are among us. ". The peasants attack the castle: they devastate it, burn it,

knock it down. The destruction of the Bastille is preceded and followed by the destruction of the hundred thousand provincial bastilles. After the war on things, the war on people comes. The wild and brutalized multitude from centuries of oppression and servitude has resolutely placed their foot on the neck of the cultured, amiable and indulgent minority, heir to a brutal violence that has exploited the misery and weakness of the masses for centuries. "It is the war of the poor against the rich," says a deputy in the National Assembly. Who is conducting this war? Everyone and nobody; "Why, says Taine; great in the hatred of the revolution and in the art of portraying it, because the characteristic of a popular insurrection is that no one obeys and no one commands".

Through the chaos of the multitude of small facts, of the changing aspects of the complex phenomenon, we try to surprise the essential nature, the inner being of the revolutionary procedure. The riot will certainly not appear to us to be the distinctive feature of the revolution; indeed, to some extent, the riot may even figure as a reactionary expedient. When in the revolutionary fact we have found the characteristic of consisting in an attempt against the authority of the existing state, we will be able to find in history a whole series of cases, from which it appears that the revolt had precisely the purpose of strengthening the power of the state, as when it was directed against a hated lord or local power. All the insurrections directed against the lords, in the feudal era, and for the benefit of the Crown, lacked this revolutionary character.

The change in the law? This too is a fact that goes hand in hand with the unfolding of the revolution, but it is not exclusive to revolutions. The law has changed every day, without us considering ourselves to be in a revolutionary period. Therefore, neither the revolt, nor the change of the law are the revolution, or, to put it better, not only them. What then?

There is a fatal date in the French Revolution, which is like the revealed mystery of that and all other revolutions: the night of 5-6 October 1789. The revolution is not, as many have

imagined, on the night of 4-5 August, which consecrated the spontaneous abandonment of noble privileges by the aristocracy. That was, after all, a simple fallback formality, which the burning of castles and noble titles, the spontaneous anarchy of the provinces, the collapse of the local authority made three quarters academic. The revolution, on the other hand, is on the night of 5-6 October. This is how Taine describes it: "Such is the new brotherhood: a funeral convoy of all legal and legitimate authorities, a triumph of brutality over intelligence, a murderous and political Shrove Tuesday, a formidable descent of the Courtille, which, preceded by her insignia of death, she drags with her the leaders of France: kings, ministers and deputies, to force them to govern according to her follies, to keep them under her pikes, until the moment she likes to slit them". On the night from 5 to 6 October the people of Paris invade the palace of Versailles and force the king and the royal family to return to Paris. That night marks the maximum decline of the royal power and of the old society, of which the absolutist monarchy was direct expression. The king who commanded France, forced to return to Paris by order under the threat of the insurgent people! All social values are turned upside down. The king who is everything has already become nothing; the people who were nothing have already become everything.

What is the night of October 5th to 6th? *The demolition of the old authorities*. Now it should be noted that here we are not dealing with generic moral authorities, but with real legal authorities. What the people of Paris accomplish that night is the moral destruction of the highest legal emergencies of the old society. Now the state is in one respect a complex of functions, and in another a complex of authorities, which perform or represent them. Lowering the person and office of those who hold the highest offices in a society is like attacking directly the machine of the traditional state. The whole revolution is a struggle against the authorities, first local, then central. The last effort of the revolution consists in overthrowing the highest

authorities of the state; but what defines the procedures we call revolutionaries is precisely the fact that they target the state.

From this point on, everything becomes natural and logical. The Constituent Assembly does nothing but follow the procedures of the "square". This attacks and materially affects the authorities of the old regime; that destroys piece by piece the legal organization of the old society. The result is the same: the central government is destroyed. Taine observes: "Things could not be otherwise. Because even before October 6 and the king's captivity in Paris, the government was effectively destroyed; now with successive decrees of the assembly, it is destroyed by right and every local group is left to itself. - The intendants are on the run, the military commanders are no longer obeyed; the justices of the peace dare not judge; parliaments are suspended; seven months pass before district and departmental administrations are elected; a year passes before the new judges are established and, after as before, all effective power is in the hands of the Municipality ". But if the central power is not obeyed, the same happens with the local power: "the causes that turn the municipalities against the authority of the center turn individuals against the authority of the place ... They also judge themselves capable of to be able to decide everything for themselves and in the right to be able to do everything with their own hands.

Now we are able to decide what is meant by revolution and by revolutionary procedure. We see that the revolution consists - considered as a formal process in the demolition of the old organism of the state. The essential thing in the revolutionary process is not the way in which this end is achieved (with the law or with the revolt, or with both) but the fact itself. The revolution has as its object the state and its demolition as its goal.

In the old society the king is something more than an authority. "*L'Etat c'est moi*". In a society founded on the hierarchy, the king is the typical embodiment of the hierarchy. To hit the king is to hit the whole old society. The Marshal of Marmontel writes in his memoirs: "I had a feeling for the person of the king which is not easy to define. It was a feeling of

devotion with an almost religious character, an innate respect as due to a being of a higher order. The word: "king" then had a magic and a power that nothing would alter in straight and pure hearts. This flower of sentiment still existed in the mass of the nation; especially in the midst of well-born people, placed at a great distance from power, one was rather struck by its splendor than by its imperfections". Well, the anger of the revolution is directed precisely towards him. Most probably the great majority of those who sentenced the king to death knew very well that Louis XVI deserved neither the honor nor the infamy of the guillotine. But the king was the summit and the embodiment of the state they wanted to demolish. The demolition of the old legal organization of the state became effective only with the beheading of his official representation. Therefore the practically revolutionary parties are, in monarchical countries, decidedly antidynastic and in republican countries they are opponents of the separation of the executive power from the legislative power. The visible aim of all revolutionary attempts is the head of state, be it a person designated by certain reasons of birth or a legal institution.

That the revolution consists in the destruction of the old state organism, either by insurrections or by legal organisms, this is evident, considering the action carried out by the Constituent Assembly. The old society was founded on the legal privileges of the aristocracy and on the distinct functions of the states; the Constituent Assembly abolishes both. Mirabeau, advocating the abolition of all old guilds and congregations, says: "particular societies, located within the general society, break the unity of its principles and the balance of its forces". Big political bodies are harmful in a state, because of the strength that results from their coalition and because of the resistance that comes from their interests. The congregations are also opposed to human rights. An institution in which a vow of obedience is made is a danger to the state. Hence the decree of the Constituent Assembly with which: "the Assembly, considering that a truly free State cannot bear within itself any corporation, not even those which,

dedicated to public education, have well deserved from the homeland" suppresses all congregations, brotherhoods, lay or ecclesiastical associations, all foundations of charity, education, conversion. Then the National Convention (31 July 1791) abolished all literary societies, municipal assets, libraries, museums, etc. What happened? The old society has all started in states, privileges, corporations, communities, governed by special laws. The new one knows only the individual. The process of the revolution thus takes place, according to an intuitive line, eliminating in turn all special laws and legal distinctions and creating in turn universal law and legal equality. The process of the revolution, or considered in the impetus of the successive riots of the square or in the quiet work of the legislating assemblies, always consists in the elimination of the old legal building. Revolution means denial. Later we will see by whom. Thus the revolution suppresses the old provinces, the old provincial states, the old municipal administrations, parliaments, juries and workers. The decree of 14-17 June 1791 establishes: "the destruction of any kind of corporations of citizens of the same state or profession, being one of the bases of the French constitution, it is forbidden to re-establish them in fact, for any pretext and in any form. Citizens of the same state or profession, entrepreneurs, those who have an open shop, workers and artisans of any art, will not be able, when they are together, to appoint neither president, nor secretaries, nor mayors, take decisions or form regulations on their alleged common interests". The revolution proceeds inexorably on its way. It destroys all the barriers that exist between the citizen and the state. At the bottom of the revolutionary process, the State will find itself facing the Citizen. Any intermediate organ will have disappeared. The two poles of the new political organism will be: the omnipotent state and the isolated citizen. "Here, says Taine, the true sovereign: the national guard voter and voter. It is he who the constitution wanted to make king; at all levels of the hierarchy, he is there with his suffrage to delegate authority and with his rifle to ensure its exercise). How to achieve this, without

breaking the old legal edifice, founded on the opposite principle and functioning in a completely different way? Taine, for example, endeavors to demonstrate that the legal and administrative mechanism created by the constituent assembly, far from forming a government that harmonically tended to an end, created a complex of institutes, which, by contrasting the age-old customs of France, paralyzed its life. . He thus believes that he is reproaching the Assembly, while he limits himself to highlighting the specific difficulty within which the Constituent Assembly was debating. He moved this from a principle, in the formation of his own constitutional scheme, which was the direct antithesis of the old order of things. How could the new organism function without the institutions of the past being entirely removed?

Taine does not know how to realize, as indeed happens to many, of the substantial interceding differences between reform and revolution. He notes, for example, that the old regime had two essential flaws: the existence of legal privileges and the lack of control over public management. That these two defects should be eliminated, Taine agrees; but he points out that such a terrible cataclysm as the revolution was not necessary to achieve the goal. Furthermore, it can be said that the old regime was taking steps to eliminate from itself, without extraneous solicitations, the reported evils. With his declaration of 23 June 1789, the monarch showed himself willing to accept the control of the States General over the administration of the treasury; as for legal privileges, he had entered into the same conscience of the noble classes that it was convenient to abolish them and cancel them from French legislation.

But it seems that the French of the eighteenth century were not willing to take too much on word neither noble classes, nor monarch. It seems that to the comfortable procedures of the reform, they preferred the more decisive ones of the revolution. Their reasoning could be summarized as follows: The essence of the absolutist regime is the free disposal of public revenues by the sovereign. Now as long as there will be an absolutist regime, it

is very likely that the alleged control of the nation will be reduced to a lustra. As far as the noble classes are concerned, their privileges are perhaps not in the nature of an institution founded on the recognition of the tricks of birth and they will not make their influence felt in some way, as long as the noble class has a kind of existence legally recognized in the state. ? Having entered into this order of thought, the French of the eighteenth century could no longer ask themselves the question of how to attenuate the extent of a simple inconvenience, but of radically removing the cause of the evil; not the problem of the constitutional defect, but of the institution itself; not a question of personal trust in the organs of power, but in power itself. In reality it was no longer a question of improving the existing state, but of destroying it. Certainly the reported inconveniences could be eliminated without changing the legal constitution of the state, but the French no longer wanted to deal with those inconveniences, but with the state. To object, therefore, that the recourse to the radical revolutionary expedient caused a general cataclysm is nothing against the revolutionaries of that time. In reality they wanted precisely to produce this ruin, and to strike the old regime in its very roots: the aristocracy, the absolute monarchy, the regime of states.

Up to now we have considered the revolution as the destruction of existing power and the revolutionary maneuvers as aimed at paralyzing the effectiveness and destroying the machinery of the state machine. The second logical moment of the revolution is the transfer of power into the hands of a new social group, or the absorption of the state function by a new political mechanism which subsequently developed in society. Nor is it necessary to add that the second logical moment of the revolution can chronologically coincide with the first or it can anticipate and succeed it. Only the study of individual revolutions can explain how and at what time power passed into the hands of the new group of rulers. In a very general sense it can be said that when revolutions take place through the transmission of power by the State in an organ (the Church, the

workers' union, etc.) already formed and born by virtue of natural germination, the revolution has a course much less tragic than in the other case, in which the social transition is carried out by sudden usurpation or by violent seizure of power by a historical group, which until now has remained extraneous to the social life of the country. The latter is precisely the case with the French Revolution

When, under the blows of the continuous popular uprisings and as a result of the subsequent decrees of the Constituent Assembly, the old French society has fallen into disrepair, the new master steps forward. Taine, who looks at the revolution with the suspicious eye of the enemy and therefore surprises some attitude that escapes the usual apologetic historians, observes: "in this dissolved society, in which popular passions are the only effective force, empire belongs to the party who will know best how to flatter them to use them. Thus, alongside the legal government which cannot repress or satisfy them, an illegal government is formed which authorizes, excites and conducts them. As the former decomposes and precipitates, the latter affirms itself and organizes itself, until, in turn, having become legal, it takes the place of the former ". Here the most relevant features of the revolutionary procedure are artistically reproduced. A state falls apart, another state is formed; one power falls, another arises, one organization is denied, another is recognized. How is the new state formed? How is the new oligarchy generated? The proceedings in the midst of which the Jacobin conquest will take place will tell us.

The ruling oligarchy is consolidated in the midst of the chaos of the revolution. Here and there in the boiling liquid matter solid points are formed, to which all the related elements of the chemical compound aggregate. The old society was earth. From it no new organism had emerged which could have gathered the elusive powers of the absolutist state and aristocratic society; and this explains the long duration of the crisis of violence and the continuous, contradictory oscillations of the revolution, which at times seems to assume all the

audacities of a true egalitarian and plebeian movement, and this other reveals his intimately bourgeois soul. The new power is formed under the eyes of the direct actors of the grandiose collapse. From the mass of the victors of the old regime a group emerges that will soon dominate the national complex and give birth to the new state.

After the storming of the Bastille, political associations arose on all sides. The government no longer existed, or the condition of things produced by the revolutionary collapse made it impossible for it to attend to its ordinary offices and therefore to provide those services which, in exchange for taxes, citizens expect from the state. It was necessary to provide for the most urgent public needs, to arm oneself against the brigands, to stock up on grain, to guard against the possible collections of the Court. Committees are installed in the municipalities; volunteers have formed themselves into city militias; thousands of almost independent local powers have taken the place of the almost destroyed central power. Every citizen becomes *de facto* sovereign. The spontaneous anarchy that follows July 14 invites the first comer to function as a government. But in short, a selection is made. Revolution is a fact that involves a triple ideological relationship with respect to it: of adhesion, of negation, of development. When power is on the ground, everyone tries to catch it: some to restore it for the benefit of the pre-existing institutions, others to preserve the demolitions that have already taken place, others still to continue the work of destruction. Later experience will show which of these groups will have gained the upper hand. Immediately after July 14, the friends of the past, a true minority of the country, are pushed aside; those who would like to limit the effects of the revolution and those who would like to extend them even further remain to contend for the field. Jacobins and Girondins, on the one hand, represent the extreme element of the revolution, and constitutional and leafy, on the other, the moderate element. The extreme element does not take long to preponderate. It succeeds with its own audacity to grasp all the advantages of the revolution

and finally boldly takes over the state and uses it for its own party purposes. The revolutionary government, that is, the terrorist dictatorship of the Jacobins, is the most classic and successful example of what all governments are ordinarily the political and victorious organization of a faction, which exploits power in the interest of ideology and of the people of the members of the class or the clientele who robbed power. The Jacobin dictatorship is the unveiled mystery of the state. Its genesis is the genesis of any political power. The antipathy of conservative historians to the government of Terror derives from the discredit that the birth of that political power throws on any political power.

The Jacobin party works feverishly to take over France. In March 1790 there were 122 revolutionary (Jacobin) committees throughout France; in 1791 there are 229; in June 1792 there are 1200; after the fall of the throne and the Prussian invasion are 26,000, per municipality. It is from among the men of these Committees that delegates to public offices are chosen. They are the political force that will give life to the Jacobin state. The Paris club gives the password and formulates the doctrine; the others join and follow. The Paris club decides what to do, the others make up the bulk of the army. In this way action and doctrine are united. Faced with the 26 million disorganized and surprised French people, the few thousand Jacobins organized and motivated by a single thought form a formidable and invincible power that will soon win over the state.

The club acts boldly. It does not even respect the authorities that emerged from the revolution. Authority is the club. It legislative power, it judicial power, it executive power. Having at his disposal, in his armed members, material force, he enforces his orders as the legal authorities fail to do. And everywhere it is the same. The audacious handful of Jacobins soon gets over the quiet flock: their deliberations are laws. Alone or almost alone to vote in the primary assemblies, deserted and raped, the Jacobins can choose, they can elect municipalities and officers of the national guard. From that moment on, for the

organ of the mayor, which has become their instrument, they can use armed force and they do. When the authorities resist, each club can count on the assistance of the neighboring club. The magistrates are either chosen by the club or, intimidated by the club, they bow to its wishes. Who can resist the organization of the Jacobins? Taine sadly exclaims: "this is the foundation of the Jacobin state: a confederation of twelve hundred oligarchies which move their clientele of proletarians on the slogan sent from Paris; it is a complete, organized, active state, with its central government, its armed force, its official newspaper, its regular correspondence, its declared policy, its established authority, its local representatives and agents; the latter actually administer alongside the canceled administrations or through the enslaved administrations". It is therefore no wonder that at a given moment this state breaks the envelope of the existing established order and directly governs France. From that moment the revolution is over. The backlash of the 9th thermidor will be a whole internal movement of the party that gets rid of some of its members and thus weakens and exposes itself to perish, but leaving to a new party the admirable organization that it, for its specific purposes, gave to France.

If you think . From 1 May 1789 to 2 June 1793, when the revolutionary government of the Jacobins was inaugurated, no government was respected and the decisive word was pronounced by the insurrection. Realists, constitutionalists, Girondists, no party has managed to effectively take over the state. From 2 June 1793 this changed. From now on, power will be respected and respected for the obvious reason that public power has become the force that previously made the functioning of the state impossible. The authoritarian machine of the state, shattered by hundreds of riots, will be reconstituted piece by piece. Executive power will be re-established in all its rigor and will enforce itself at the cost of the lives of hundreds of citizens. The riot will be violently suppressed and severely punished. Finally, France will be endowed with such a perfect administrative organization that no party will think of changing it,

because it equally assures all parties that they can have undisputed dominion in their hands. The revolution, having traveled the parable from the destruction of the pre-existing power to the formation of the new power, is over.

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Revolutionary procedures and tactics therefore consist in a system of attacks against the existing form of the state, the functions of which tend to destroy, or at least reduce, and in the formation of an organism or a series of distinct organisms. from that of the existing State, which must tend to absorb all the functions or fragments of functions that can be subtracted from the legal organism of the dominant State.

It also follows that, whatever the extreme aims of revolutionary action may be, revolutions are always political, that is, they always target the existing form of the state, and with its modifications they tend to act on the underlying social relations. Any transformation of social relations not followed by an alteration made in the political relations of a group of men does not have a revolutionary character. Revolutionary action is therefore a political action, insofar as it can only be thought of as an action concerning the mechanism of the State and the relations of public law existing between citizens.

The result of every triumphant revolution is to pass power from the hands of one dominant group into the hands of another group. Revolution is, therefore, the only means of taking possession of the state from a class or a party. Any other means leaves the dominant group at the head of the state.

CHAPTER TWO

The Reformist Procedure

To define the character of the reform, we will use in this chapter the same method that allowed us in the previous chapter to establish in a concrete way what the revolutionary procedure consisted of. This method seems to us the only one that can introduce some clarity into the terminology used by parties and political science. The great Lutheran ecclesiastical transformation will provide us with the subject of this rapid investigation, since it was certainly the most complete and classic episode of change introduced with pure reformist methods, so much so that it is still considered the Reformation par excellence. The only method for establishing a satisfactory nomenclature for political science seems to be precisely that of tracing the history of the words they use. It is useless in these cases to rely on simple philology. It is better to understand under what circumstances and with what meaning a certain word was first circulated.

It is now doubtful whether it will ever be possible for politics to become a positive science like economics, owing to the same difficulty of narrowing the field and distinctly understanding the purpose of what we usually call political activities; but it is in any case evident that this result cannot be obtained before satisfactorily establishing the right and precise meaning of the words that are most commonly used in politics. Economics too uses words either of common use or common to other sciences (mind the concept of value, essential to the science of economics, no less than ethics) but the specific meaning it assigns to those words is reached through a minute psychological and historical investigation of the special activities that are put in place to carry out some of those processes that give rise to concepts used by economic science.

So what is the Reformation? What spirit is the soul? What are the characteristics of a reformist movement, considered in opposition to a revolutionary movement? I believe that considering the specific nature of Luther's work and reflecting on the logical nature of the procedures used in the movement that takes his name, it will be easy for us to solve these various problems. The great historian of the Reformation in Germany, Bezold, giving a general appreciation of Luther's work, cannot help but observe: "*in general, Luther's work cannot be denied a conservative character*". The historian of the Reformation comes to this general appreciation after having meticulously described the great change that the Lutheran work introduced in Germany. It therefore seems that the conservative character of a social change does not consist in the simple respect of the existing conditions of things, but in a certain determined way of carrying out the change, or of respecting the existing order of things. The conservative character does not belong to a party for the simple fact that it wants to maintain the conditions of existing things. Even a revolutionary party wants to preserve the advantages of the revolution, compared to another party that wants to destroy them. It seems, therefore, that one can also be an innovator while remaining conservative. It would therefore be a great mistake to consider conservatives only those who endeavor to maintain the legal systems that exist in an era. On the other hand, the conservatives ... of a revolutionary passing, are no less revolutionaries than those who to bring about the change overturned the old legality. More. Luther's work does not consist at all in the return to a condition of pre-existing things, so that the conservative or retroactive character of the passing away could be induced, but in a true unchanging with respect to the past and the present. Nevertheless, the historian of the Reformation attributes to this work the character of social conservation. In a short time, we will adhere unconditionally to the judgment of the German historian and this will allow us to open a notable passage to the applications of contemporary history, which we will make in the next chapter and where we

will deal with the existing political parties. Even then there will be justifiable observation that the desire and the act of transformation are not enough to qualify a party as progressive or revolutionary. Moreover, from what we wrote in the previous chapter, it is quite clear that revolutionary party and action are only those that propose transformation by snatching power itself from the factions that today hold power, or by destroying the latter.

It goes without saying that the movement of the Reformation, if it took the form of a religious movement, invested all aspects of social life and carried out transformations that did not remain in the pure field of abstract and intangible relations between man and the infinite, in which it is generally done consist religion. Engels rightly observes: “the Middle Ages had annexed all forms of ideology: philosophy, politics, jurisprudence to theology and had made as many sections of this. And therefore he forced every political and social movement to assume a theological form; to produce a great subversion, it was necessary to present to the minds of the masses, nourished almost exclusively by religion, their interests covered in a religious form”. But the Reformation was not only mixed with theology and economic jurisprudence. Luther, who was a bizarre pleasure-seeker, devoid of any refinement and not too inclined to mystical ignitions, aimed by the very nature of his nature not only at the celestial revolution, but also at the earthly one. He could not propose a revolution that he simply sought to establish how the Christian could go to heaven and whether or not there really was the body of the Lord in the consecrated host. Moreover, the circumscribed framework within which the dispute over indulgences is inserted already reveals what earthly interests were stirring in it.

Archbishop Albrecht of Mainz and Magdeburg was Leo X's general commissioner in Germany for the so-called granting of indulgences. We also know that he was jointly interested in speculation and that he hoped by that means to pay the 30,000 gold florins that he had borrowed from the Fuggers, on the

occasion of his entry into the office of archbishop of Mainz. He had given the task of preaching indulgences to the monk John Tetzel, one of those equivocal and ingenious figures who so often meet in periods of social dissolution. The Koestlin describes the now ingenious and refined, now grotesque and coarse means that the Tetzel used to grab all the money he could from the believing fools. Having come to the borders of the territory of Frederick the Wise, elector of Brandenburg and great protector of Luther, Frederick, although he was a fervent and bigoted Catholic, did not allow him to enter his states, but only to preach indulgences on the borders. The good Federico, who in the prints of the time appears to us a well-natured and rounded crapulone, had assembled a magnificent collection of shanks and rags of saints with which he was making a considerable profit. The business of indulgences was not too good for him. Was it not perhaps too fierce competition that the papal messenger came to move him into the house? - The fact is that, when in the summer of 1516 Luther began to preach his doubts about the right that the Pope had to grant indulgences, he knew perfectly well not to risk too much because he could count on the unlimited protection and assistance of his worthy Gambrinus scepter. The fact is that Luther does not fight the principle of indulgences, but rather the commercial abuse that the popes made of it. He wanted, as a good salesman, but to discredit the competing merchandise, but not to compromise the stinking rags and sooty bones, from which his wide-buttocked Federico took so honest advantage.

But more than from this microscopic and gossiping incident, the temporal character of the Reformation resulted from the same conditions from which it was getting in the mood. Germany was then in full turmoil and a thousand questions were stirred up. Beneath every spiritual struggle were material interests, as soon as it spread to the multitudes and began to have a visible form. And besides the religious movement there were other issues, about which German blood was stirred. Peaceful and violent attempts to reshape the empire, princely and dynastic ambitions, external wars and immense social upheavals

accompanied and influenced the progress of the Reformation. In spite of all the protests, spiritual and temporal interests united and intertwined with each other: "this Gospel, Luther deplores, falls admirably in the common people and it welcomes them materially". Bezold, from whom we remove several of these observations, more explicitly observes: "But not only in the common people, but also in the higher spheres, the fall of the Church, alongside religious ideas and passions, must have unleashed other questions, in the solution of which sometimes the religious color then in vogue might have seemed very convenient". The Reformation, not unlike the French Revolution, takes its lead and in part emerges from a great mixing of classes, classes, parties; but, while the second accompanies and causes considerable political progress, the same cannot be said of the first. This is clear enough when the "mode" of the Reformation and its results are taken away.

To understand well the conservative and almost reactionary character of the Reformation, it must be borne in mind that it faces the incidence of two opposing revolutionary movements: the one promoted by the tortured and vilified peasantry against feudal oppression, and the other of the aristocratic classes against the foreign power of Rome. Ultimately all the classes of the empire are in full turmoil and therefore the conditions exist for a general cataclysm. The aristocrats, in fact, do not hesitate to unleash the popular beast against the ecclesiastical enemy, in order to achieve their ends of domination. But it is then evident that the plebs of the cities and the countryside, raised against the Church, will end up turning against the castle. At the Diet of 1518 an anonymous writing appeared to the German princes, probably itself of princely origin, in which the participants were invited not to take the papal declamations seriously in order to obtain subsidies against the Turks. The revolt against Rome was universal. The impudent behavior of the courtiers, the various extortions in the form of vintages, pallium fees, confirmations, expectations and reservations or whatever they were called, were fully highlighted

in the response of the States General and even more in a memorial from the bishop and of the clergy of Liège, qualifying as thieves and robberies the curial arts, with which the prebends, instead of deserving people, gave themselves to donkeys, slackers, charlatans. On the other hand, the peasantry broke the brakes, and here and there broke out in open revolt. His discontent, as often happens in similar cases, was exploited by all the forces that then competed for hegemony and yet his brutal forces were now by the Church turned against the aristocratic class and used to keep him in subjection by Rome, and now by the aristocracy against the Church of Rome. Here the Reform intervenes, which, by restoring the authority of temporal power, subjects the innumerable mass of slaves to the power of the state.

What Luther really wanted to do, as a man who had in mind to introduce a reform into laws and customs, is not always clear. The apologetic legend, which portrays him as the brilliant creator of an ecclesiastical and moral reform that has become increasingly necessary, cannot be accepted so easily. He seems to have willingly surrendered to the varying suggestions of subsequent circumstances. The weakness of his will seems almost to be reflected in the decision with which he rejected free will. Considering the drawings that he confusedly stirred in his head, through the famous writing "*An der christlichen Adel deutscher Nation*", in which his apologists almost recognize the program of his activity, we are forced to find in his work an entirely terrestrial and thunderstorm. For those who consider well the order in which his thoughts unfold, he has only one thing in mind: to fortify the state against the citizen, to place the authority of the prince above any rivalry of powers and thus to consolidate the oppression of the individual. The path by which Luther arrives at these results is quite long. As is known, in his famous writing, still a delight of German literature, Luther wants to tear down, as he says, the three walls that preside over the papal curia. The three walls are these: that the temporal authorities can do nothing over the ecclesiastics; that the pope alone has the power to interpret the Gospels; that he alone can

convoke the council. Luther objects that every Christian is a priest and can therefore interpret the Gospels in his own way; that the convocation of councils belongs to every Christian and above all to the emperors; that the ecclesiastical authorities should be subjected to the earthly authorities. He advises cities not to pay ecclesiastical taxes and not to admit that ecclesiastical prebends and fiefdoms are covered by Rome. Individual Churches must live independently. The Pope must not be superior to the Emperor, but subordinate to him in all earthly things.

What was this program practically aiming for? The Hutten, Luther's aristocratic completer, places the points on the i's. The substantial part of Hutten's program is a great secularization of ecclesiastical goods and the abolition of papal supremacy. He tends to a strong reduction of the clergy and says that 99 out of 100 of the clergy are superfluous. The suppression of the convents and the ecclesiastical independence of Germany are the only means by which the weakness of the Empire can be remedied. The Hutten had a fairly clear idea of how the state could make use of the ecclesiastical assets available. In its sense, those were to serve, in addition to public education and charity, also and above all to the formation of a large imperial army, so those numerous elements of the empire who then lived on robberies, would have had an honorable existence in the pay of the state. Unfortunately, the triumphant Reformation had to fully implement Hutten's anti-proletarian program. For one thing, in Nuremberg, after the Reformation and the subsequent confiscation of ecclesiastical assets, barely a tenth of the income, which previously were donated to charitable purposes, was used in this way. All the rest served for purposes of enjoyment and elevation of the wealthy classes!

Whoever therefore considers the Reformation in the program of Hutten and Luther, will easily understand how it had a double purpose: subjugation of the Church to the State, for the assertion of the authority of the State; confiscation of ecclesiastical assets, to make greater resources available to the

State and therefore to give it greater authority over the Church and citizens. Basically, the two purposes only serve one purpose. What we really want is to consolidate the authority of the state. Naturally there were very positive principles, which in the Reformation saw only the appropriation of ecclesiastical goods and others which, through the subjugation of the Church, aimed at the growth of their own temporal power, until then divided or contained by ecclesiastical power. Comic, with regard to the former, the case of the nobility of Pomerania, which at first resolutely advocated the introduction of the Reformation, but, a few years later, realized that in their lands the goods of the Church were worth very little and therefore there was no much to be laicized, he fought any innovation. Of the latter we remember the Margrave Casimir of Brandenburg, who approached the Reformation to have "the supreme authority willed by God" the clergy in his hands and weaken the hated power of the bishops. Thus the theological dispute was resolved in a prosaic account of give and take, in a balance of profits and losses. Yet the Reformation is all in these episodes. Its conservative character could not be highlighted by anything else. This will become even clearer from an observation.

The Church in the Middle Ages is a real competitor of the state. With the sacrament and with the authority of the prelates it takes possession of man, from the cradle to the grave. As soon as he was born, she hastens to call him into the temple, baptize him, make him with her. Child, she marks it with her insignia. Adult, she declares him husband and authorizes him to become a father. Guilty, he interrogates him, condemns him or acquits him. Dying, she stretches out her hand to him as if to take possession of his agony. Dead, she confides him in the earth and assists him in the superworldly regions. To break the power of the Church, Luther attacks the sacraments. He recognizes only three; baptism, penance, eucharist; but he makes its virtue consist not in the intervention of the priest, but in the faith of the Christian. The deceptive appearance is that Luther fights on the terrain of theology, but in reality he is conducting a pure political struggle.

The Church dominates the Christian and contends him with the State through the sacraments. Having demolished the sacraments and having made their exercise a simple private affair of the Christian, she remains in front of the Christian only the State. The private citizen no longer divides his care between the State and the Church and no longer takes advantage of the possible frictions of the two rival powers. For this fact his freedom remains halved. Indeed, freedom means mutual limitation of powers. Our society tries to organize the freedom of the individual through coalitions of interests and spontaneous groupings of citizens, and allowing anyone, within certain limits, not too flexible (think of the enormous chain of public opinion), the expression of thought own . The only freedom that the Middle Ages knew was limited by the rivalry and jealousy of the two powers, which, in competition with each other, tried to attract the complex of all citizens into their sphere. The Lutheran Reform, managing to eliminate the power of the Church, puts the individual, bound hands and feet, at the mercy of state power.

And here we are finally able to understand what a formal and technical procedure - reform consists of and how it differs from a revolution; it being then abstractly possible that a determined political end could be reached through revolutionary ways or through reforms. Stripped, in fact, of all the theological and dogmatic surplus and reduced to its simplest expression of contingent innovation in some social relations, what is the Reformation but a well-circumscribed nationalistic movement, which proposes to subtract the German ecclesiastical hierarchy to the supreme authority of Rome and to submit the administration of the goods of the Church and the nationalized Church to the political authority of the individual German states? That to reach such a prosaic result it was necessary to inconvenience Domeneddio and start from the theses on indulgence and human freedom is one of those many oddities that history allows itself, and explains why Luther succeeded in making it seem like Charles V himself had in mind, who indisputably caressed the confessor of the emperor John Glapion

himself and of whose necessity the predecessor of Leo X, the gloomy Spaniard Hadrian VI, was intimately convinced. But if, as a result, the Reformation appears to us as a motion aimed at increasing state authority; as a technical procedure it takes place according to a line that starts precisely from the State and whose initiative, far from coming from the citizen, came from the State.

Luther is a sworn enemy of the riot. In his "Admonition to all Christians, so that they guard against uprisings and revolts" (1522) Luther blames any personal revenge, because the use of force belongs only to the authority, in no case to the people. "Those who rightly understand my doctrine, he says, do not make riots; I have never given an example. I have been and will always be with the one against whom the revolt is directed and I will always be against the one who uses it, even if his cause is just". This hatred of the reformists for violence is singular. Indeed, it can be said to be one of the typical characteristics of the reformist mentality. Certainly for the course of hundreds of years, up to us, systematically, the reformist is an abhorrent of violence. The reformist was the one at fault. The historian of the Reformation in Germany notes that Luther kept behind that ever more pressing movement, which already from the fifteenth century tried to give the State, with its other attributions, even the supremacy of the Church. The only salvation, for Luther, is the State, the same writer still notes. According to the Hundeshagen demonstration, the State assumes for Luther the character of a true educational institution. Luther wrote to Melanchthon "our revolutions are vain Platonic laws if the Court does not grant us its protection". Therefore Melanchthon observed that Luther's homage to the state was blind servility. He is therefore not surprising that the Reformation resolves itself in replacing the overturned ecclesiastical hierarchy with a religious order founded on the principle of the same dependence on political authority. Likewise, the state socialists, who in Latin countries like to call themselves reformist socialists, tend to replace the capitalist organization of free competition with a system of industrial regulations established by the state. Another

reformer, Calvin, continuing and exaggerating the movement initiated by Luther to the point of ridicule, succeeds in constructing a system of full and absolute state omnipotence. In his reform code, published in 1535, on the establishment of the Christian religion, he proclaims the rights of authority as no one had done before him. "Authority, he says, is as indispensable to men as bread, sun and air." He does not ask the power just to maintain material order, but to punish sacrileges, offenses against religion and prevent the seeds of idolatry from being sown among the people. Never was the concept of authority so sadly confirmed as in the confession of faith of the Calvinists of France, cited by D'Aubigné, where precisely we read: "we affirm that we must obey the laws and statutes of the magistrates, pay taxes and other contributions, to carry the yoke of subjection with a good and frank will, even when the authorities were unfaithful, because only in this way the sovereign empire of God remains unaffected. Thus we detest those who would like to reject the superior authorities, put community and confusion in goods, overturn the order of justice ". Therefore it was precisely in France that Calvinism was a completely aristocratic movement. The essence of reformism as is the affirmation of state authority over rival powers or the mass of citizens, and as state authority is ultimately the garrison of the ruling classes, these do not hesitate in the long run to proclaim their sympathy for the reform. This is very visible in Luther's Germany.

The favor that Luther meets in Germany among the ruling classes would appear singular if we were not already aware of the conservative character of the Reformation. As soon as he begins his propaganda, the cardinals Albert of Mainz, Matthew of Salzburg, the Schimmer of Sitten and the bishop of Liège, Ebelardo de la Mark look with sympathy at Luther. As of the high clergy so of the aristocracy. From the beginning Luther supported Duke Giovanni and Prince Giovanni Federico, respectively brother and son of the Elector Federico. Duke Charles of Münsterberg, prince of Silesia, was among his warmest patrons. As the cities were the most intense hearth of

the Reformation, the upper class came down to advocate Luther's cause with a zeal and enthusiasm that did not accord with the habits of prudence and reserve, which we usually find in this class. The historian of the Reformation observes: "but very unlike the higher circles of the German nation, the bourgeoisie seized the Lutheran cause from the beginning". In Nuremberg, after the Reformation subsequently gained the wealthy classes, the Wrocław City Council takes the initiative of the expulsion of the monks and the secularization of the cult's assets. In Magdeburg, in Alberstadt, we find the movement encouraged by the burgomasters.

The favor of the possessing classes explains the rapid success of Martin Luther, a very mediocre man in himself, whose thinking always appears weak and vacillating and whose soul is certainly not on a par with that of the great heretics, from Arnaldo da Brescia and Fra Dolcino to Savonarola, and whose triumph is certainly not related to the personal qualities of man. Girolamo Aleandro, librarian and papal nuncio, who accompanied Charles V to Germany, describes in his notes to the Roman Curia the agitation of the property classes. He finds that most of the clergy, all jurists, and in a special way "the boring grammarians and poets", the Reuchlinians and the Erasmusians, side with Luther and they are joined by an extremely dangerous element: the nobility "with the gaglioffo satyr Hutten" to the head. After Luther's bull of excommunication was published, Cardinal Albert of Mainz forbade it to be given effect. The University of Ingolstadt for a time opposed the publication. In Vienna the majority of the academic body, conniving the bishop, rejected the proposal of excommunication of the overzealous theological faculty. The secular princes, first of all Luther's most determined opponent, George of Saxony, were reluctant. William of Bavaria ordered the Eck to withdraw the Bull, because it caused discontent and riots in the population. *Tanta molis erat* the taking possession of the goods of the Church.

What a marvel! The reformist movements, when they really cannot count on the open favor of the property classes, are

unlikely to be openly opposed by them. Just as reformism ultimately proposes to increase the powers of the state by acting on social relations by means of the state mechanism, the result of reformist action, even when it is apparently favorable to the subject classes, is resolved in the advantage of the ruling classes. Thus arranges the curious dialectic of history. And this explains the favor of the ruling classes.

Now what must be noted is that, at its beginnings, the Reformation is a movement that affects all social classes, and so also the proletarians, who enthusiastically welcome the anti-papal campaign and only react against it when they manage to realize that the the result was a worsening of their condition. But this result is not, so to speak, intentional and programmatic, because on the contrary the Reformation, by removing ecclesiastical exploitation and some of the evils connected with the Roman organization of the Church, aimed to succeed in the benefit of the poorer classes. Such a result burst forth from the dialectical movement inherent in the reformist action by which it reacts against the end it has proposed and turns it into its opposite. Thus, while serfdom, against which the Wicleffian agrarian revolution (1381) had started, has been abolished in England since the end of the fifteenth century, the Lutheran Reformation is the beginning in Germany of the wildest and most ferocious feudal and d 'reaction. a peasant oppression of which history does not remember the same. The Reformation can bring only a word of cowardly and hypocritical resignation to the crowds of the oppressed and vilified peasants and a sophisticated demonstration of the inexorable necessity of their animal oppression. It is therefore no wonder that when, after the peasants' war was won, the bloodiest and cruelest repressions in history raged, and before which the memory of the horrible revenge to which the French aristocracy abandoned itself, after *the Jacqueries* of 1538, the poor peasants, accused of having participated in the hush, went up the gallows shouting: "And may the devil assist us now!" So it seemed to those poor people that

the God of Luther and the God of Rome were very closely related.

Nothing reveals, at once, the substantial antithesis resulting between revolution and reform, on the one hand, and the conservative character of the latter on the other, as much as Luther's conduct during the peasants' war. Bezold honestly observes that Luther was the herald of a reaction, which in terms of brutality never had the same. Yet the peasant uprising broke out from the same circumstances that produced the Lutheran heresy and in more than one way completed it. Carlstadt, who initiates the peasant anarchist movement, is a disciple of Luther and completes his doctrines in his own way. Luther said: "Let's go back to the Gospel and let everyone interpret it in his own way." And here is the Carlstadt from the reading of the Gospel to deduce that the cult of images is idolatry, that the monogamous family is a violation of divine law, that above man there can be no other authority than the divine and therefore all earthly authorities. spiritual and temporal represent an offense to the will of God and must be overturned without regard. Why do we have to pay taxes? Carlstadt wonders. Under what are the laws and the state? Let's re-establish the jubilee year, he proclaims. Isn't that the way he prescribes the Bible, the sacred book that Luther placed in everyone's hands? —Carlstadt is a perfect revolutionary, compared to Luther he has the keenest sense of respect for the state and authority, while he attacks the state and authority.

Muenzer begins his revolutionary preaching in Muehlhausen (15 September 1524). The peasants formulate the famous code of their twelve claims, in which, alongside some reforms of the ecclesiastical organization welcome to Luther himself, they openly demand the abolition of feudal servitude. Muenzer and the peasants declare their ideal ancestry to Luther. He defines the first as "the Satan of Allstedt" and in the writing "*Ermahnung zum Frieden auf die zwölf Artikel der Bauernschaft in Schwaben*" declares the peasant movement contrary to the Gospels. He introduces the distinction between temporal and

spiritual things. For the former he wants the princes and lords to be omnipotent and that the peasants obey without question. Luther's faithful disciple, Dominic Guzman of Protestantism, Melanchthon, refuting the twelve articles that included all the claims of the peasants, argued that there was no limit to the rights of the state and to the obligation of obedience in subjects. The governmental authority may at will levy taxes, without being accountable. It has the right to punish, in all its rigor and extent. Coupling the ferocity of the beast with the hypocrisy of the clergyman, he claims offense to God and to human mercy that the servitude of the German peasants was too mild! These are the spirit knights of the German nation. Heine knew his chickens when he said that the German is proud of the whip that whips him, as long as he carries his prince's coat of arms on it.

War breaks out. The peasants, reduced to the conditions of brutes for centuries of unspeakable oppression, make the lords experience all the savagery brought about in them by the feudal regime: they kill, devastate, set on fire, destroy, without mercy of sex, age, condition. As the lords wanted them, such they have become. Luther becomes the herald of the lords and before they manage to assemble the great army with which they will come to quell the revolt, he uses the prestige of his name to compel the peasants to obey. He launches the booklet "*Wider die mörderischen und räuberischen Rotten der Bauer*" which is considered the code of future repression. Luther foams with anger in the face of the peasants' uprising. He invokes against them all the lightning bolts of God and the revenge of men. "The donkey wants to be beaten, he writes, and the plebs treated with violence." And he never ceases to urge the princes to join forces, to pass on their little disagreements, to face the riot resolutely, to repress it without mercy, nor concern. The princes take him at his word. They rally, beat and tame the rebels. The most frightening repression that can ever be imagined begins and which barely recalls the massacres of Christians organized by the Roman emperors. Then Luther, with the hypocrisy that is proper to him, tries to advise clemency. The theologian Emsen

characterizes its duplicity with the words: "*Nun so er das Feuer angezündet, wäscht er mit Pilato die Händ, den Mantel nach dem Wind hin wendt*".

Thus the most classic and typical example of reform that history presents to us proves the essence and conservative nature of the reformist movements, as their result is to consecrate a growing extension of the powers of the State and a more complete subjection of the individual to the Political power. *In fact, by social reform we mean, not just any change in existing social relations, but that particular mode of change that is implemented by resorting to the use of the legal mechanisms of the State.* And as long as the state mechanism is used to bring about a change, even if this - in a hypothetical and abstract line - is the most radical and total, it will always have the character of reform. While the limited and partial transition will appear to be revolutionary, as long as it is achieved against the will of the existing powers of the state and regardless of their action. It is almost superfluous to note at this point that we consider the first changes as contrary to progress, and the second as progressive - that is, beneficial. But this will become clearer from the things we will be saying in the next chapter.

Meanwhile, this point should be taken for granted, that any "reform" implies the implementation of a legal change without disturbing the power of the ruling classes or factions. The form of the domain may also change, but the owners of the domain keep their situation. This is perhaps the main feature of any reformist transformation. In the revolution, on the other hand, the opposite occurs, namely that the dominant class or social group is dispossessed of power for the benefit and benefit of another class or social group.

CHAPTER THREE

Revolutionary Parties, Reformist Parties and
Reactionary Parties

In the previous chapters we have tried to define the nature of the revolutionary process and that of the reformist process. The practical importance of this definition consists in avoiding the misunderstanding that conservatives intend to create about the nature of the two procedures and the consequences of their application. Now we are obliged to define the action of a revolutionary party, which acts outside a period of real crisis of revolution, and to oppose it to the action of both a reformist party and a reactionary party. The very recent history of England gives us an example of a party, the radical, which in two successive eras functions first as a revolutionary party and then as a reformist party, and yet allows us to grasp the specific differences that intercede between a reformist party and a revolutionary party in the life of the same party.

And perhaps, from the contrary influences of such a strange development of the same party from revolutionary to conservative, it will be possible for us to explain the reasons for the strange contrasts presented to us in contemporary life in England, which, while, according to rightly observes the *Seignobos*, evolves in political forms towards a regime that recalls, in its external mechanism, the organization of France under the Terror and the Convention, preserves hereditary monarchy and lords, privileged State Church, gratuitousness of elective functions, restriction of the right of suffrage, and the most perfect fusion of the interests of the state with those of the aristocracy of blood and money; it will be given to us, we repeat, to understand also the contrary influences and of such different value of revolutionary activity and reformist activity. From this fact it will be easy for us to remove an indication that we will deepen further on, regarding the disadvantages that can derive to

society from the prevalence of a reformist movement. We indicate the reactionary party par excellence in the clerical party and the reasons for this preference will be given later.

What then is a revolutionary party? The answer may seem simple: a party which for the realization of certain social, administrative or political ends attacks and attempts to demolish the existing form of the state. All social struggles are political struggles, that is, they are struggles fought on the ground of the state. It is the specific feature of that historical period, which we call civilization, that all the struggles against or in favor of certain social classes simultaneously struggle against or in favor of the existing form of the state. A party that seeks to achieve its goals through the revolutionary ways is naturally a party that attacks the existing form of the state. Conversely, a party that respects the existing forms of the state will never be a revolutionary party. But the manifestation of the revolutionary activity of a party is not as simple a matter as it might seem at first sight. Is a revolutionary party out of necessity, and systematically, an illegal party? It must be answered that it is only from a certain moment onwards. In fact, the struggle against the existing form of the State can also be conducted by attacking some manifestation, organ or mechanism detached, from time to time and in a gradual manner, and this struggle can also take place on the ground of existing legality. In a certain sense, not all the manifestations of the state's activity, at a given moment, are indispensable to its existence and not all its manifestations are essential to a given form of regiment. The state can allow to renounce some of its attributes or functions, tolerate a limitation of the power of the ruling class, without therefore abdicating.

But the essential moment in the life of the state is that in which the rights of the social group that has the state in its hands are contested. Generally such a dispute assumes the aspect of a dispute over the constitution of the State, the fundamental pact, written or tacit, that governs it, or the principle that animates it. Of course, from this point on, the state cannot tolerate experiments aimed at challenging its *raison d'être*. The resolute

and decisive defense it makes of the existing constitution and the no less resolute attacks to which it is exposed give rise to the real revolutionary crisis. Except that the crisis is also the moment of a trial. The crisis does not arise immediately. Generally it can be said that there is no political regime which, before reaching the extreme defenses, does not make concessions to the claims of the revolutionaries. This means that the decisive crisis is preceded by a series of moments that participate in its character and can qualify as revolutionaries, just like the crisis itself. Therefore a party which acts by developing a series of aggressive actions against the State, in order to prevent some of its actions and manifestations and to permanently remove a certain function from it, even if it acts on the ground of legality, provided that it has the definitive elimination in sight. of the existing political form, it is a revolutionary party. That then at a certain point it stops and renounces to continue its demolitions and does not push its action to the point of striking the fundamental constitution of the state, this does not diminish the revolutionary character of the previous action. From a certain point on, it must be concluded, revolutionary action has stopped for whatever cause remains to be determined.

Let us look at the history of the English radical party, from which then arise those men and those homogeneous political factions that carry out the partial demolition of the *ancien régime* in England. Since the first half of the eighteenth century there was a party of political reform in England by means of universal suffrage which called itself radical. It had made its first public appearance in 1769 on the occasion of the Wilkes trial, and through the *Corresponding Society* it had entered into a relationship, around 1793, with the advanced republicans of France. Their program coincided with that of the French revolutionaries and could be summarized as follows: Establishment of an English democratic republic. It was a group of a few dozen people, almost all living in London, and practicing literature. The government didn't joke with them. He persecuted them unceremoniously and forced them to stop all public

activity. But it seems that they did not give up some propaganda activity. It is certain that they continued to recruit adherents and were gradually able to absorb the whole group of Bentham's pupils. In Cobbet, a very radical and communist-oriented journalist, son of peasants, a soul who shared in popular sufferings, they found the agitator and propagandist they needed. This group of radicals was into republican politics, preached indifference in religious matters, in economic matters attacked "the unproductive classes": landowners, lords, and clergy. The means by which they wanted to achieve their ends was not violence, although this was not excluded from the means they intended to use, but universal suffrage. Certainly at a certain moment the struggle for the achievement of universal suffrage seemed to make the use of real violence inevitable.

The political conditions of England at the beginning of the nineteenth century were no different from those of France at the end of the eighteenth century. The central government kept the old 14th century scaffolding; it officially consisted of three powers: the king assisted by his council, the Chamber of the Gross and the House of Commons. The king was considered irresponsible, but in reality his obligation to choose the ministers among the majority was not sanctioned until after very long struggles, which ended with the defeat of George II, who had tried to reconstitute the personal government of the king. But in reality England was until the beginning of the nineteenth century a thing and a possession of the landed and financial aristocracy. The plutocracy was the *de facto* government of the United Kingdom. A ridiculous electoral regime for the lower house, a grotesque system of local administration, of which only imbeciles can admire the beauties, the system of the official Church, of religious intolerance, of the exclusion of Catholics from public office, England a great collective fief of the noble class. English society remained, according to the medieval conception, dominated by the difference between rich and poor: those who owned had all the private and political rights; those who did not possess were excluded from all public life and also from the

guarantees of private liberty. As can be seen from the novels of Disraeli or from the tragic painting of Engels, they were two nations superimposed on each other, one privileged, the other disinherited. Radical agitation moved against this state of affairs.

While, with the revolution, France got rid of the old regime, the fear of the revolution forced England to stiffen in its traditional institutions. In 1814, old England was more solid and secure than in 1789. Contrary to what happened in France, any institution sanctified by old age looked respectable. Burke had already formulated the theory in 1790 that everything sanctified by tradition is respectable. The Tory party, with the king's full confidence, relying on a huge parliamentary majority, dominated unchallenged. When the Jacobin wars ceased, the aristocratic and landed majority had two measures taken: 1^o they forbade the entry of foreign grains; 2nd abolished the income tax established during the war. These measures naturally increased public misery. The problem of England at this moment was the same one faced by France a few years earlier. It was a question of getting rid of the ancient aristocratic regime, covered by a subtle mask of constitutionalism. In this case too, the struggle was waged on the political ground. Behind the existing form of the state were the ruling classes. It was not possible to eliminate these from the domination of society without changing the form of the state organization. At the same time, the political problem was becoming more complicated by a real economic problem. The nascent industry of England gave rise to phenomena of economic agony. During thirty years England went through six economic crises (1816, 1819, 1826-29, 1837, 1842, 1848). Each crisis threw thousands of people on the *lástrico*. And the crises, of course, were largely a product of England's customs regime. But this could not be removed without breaking the dominion of the landed aristocracy, protected by the political constitution of the state. Therefore the struggle for the political renewal of the state coincided with the interest of the working mass.

Two main forces operated towards this end: 1^o the real labor movement, which later took on the specific form of

Chartism; 2^o the radical movement of the advanced bourgeoisie. They both consciously aimed to dispossess the aristocratic classes of their political dominance and to do so they claimed universal suffrage. Radicals and Chartists believed that when the mass had the right to vote, the parliamentary majorities would be in favor of popular demands and would adopt a policy of transforming the state mechanism. The government too would pass into the hands of the people and the Crown would have no other office than that of decorative superfluity. Chartists and radicals deliberately tended to replace the ruling classes of the landed and financial aristocracy with the working and small property classes.

It is well known how the ruling classes dealt with these demands. The government violently repressed the revolutionary uprisings. The regent of the United Kingdom to whom the votes of the meeting in Spafield in favor of electoral reform were presented expressed his "surprise and pain" at those votes, and at the reopening of the House declared the British electoral regime the most perfect electoral regime ever. existed on the face of the earth. The demonstrations took on an anti-dynastic character. The Plutocratic Chamber voted the suspension of the *habeas corpus* and authorized the justice of the peace to arrest and detain without judgment the authors and sellers of writings opposed "to the political institutions of the kingdom and aimed at undermining the principles of property." Another law gave the government the power to dissolve any meeting in which it excited itself at the hatred and contempt of the government and the constitution; the refusal to separate, liable to death (1817).

Deputy Burdett formulates the radicals' claims to the Chamber: universal suffrage, secret ballot, regular constituencies, annual elections. Immediately followed the *meeting* of Peterloo, the Hunt trial, the hanging of the five accused of plotting against the life of ministers (1820); the agitation did not lead to practical results, but it was not exhausted either. Now what is interesting to note from our point of view is that the aims of this agitation were indeed revolutionary in the way we have defined the

revolutionary aim. What they consisted of was the change in the existing form of the state and the passage of the government to social classes other than those that had held it up to that moment. Yet the parties that lead this agitation operate in a way that does not offend the existing material legality. It almost seems that they want to change the existing form of the state with the permission of this same state. They make use of the existing right of assembly and petition, to organize the legal dispossession of the ruling classes of the power they hold. Their action is revolutionary, but not illegal, so much so that the public powers need to change the existing law to hit them (suspension of the *habeas corpus*). But the ruling classes are not mistaken. They see revolutionary ends even under mild demands and resist. Their resistance is victorious. The revolutionary purpose of the Chartist-radical movement: to wrest the state from the financial and landed aristocracy, fails. Only later did the aristocratic classes begin a policy of spontaneous concessions.

There are many prejudices that the new conceptions of history have introduced into current opinions. It is considered historical materialism to admit an iron correspondence between the ruling classes and the ways of domination. Thus the absolutist monarchy would correspond to the prevalence of the aristocratic and feudal classes; and the constitutional and parliamentary form of the state would be an indication of bourgeois regiment. But in reality the reason for this fact cannot be understood. What matters to the classes is the domain, not the form of the domain. It certainly happens that a dominant faction ends up by identifying the essence of its dominion with the external form that the exercise of this domination takes. So when he sees those forms challenged, he resolutely defends them to the point of making his own disaster solidarity with the disaster of the dominant political forms. But there can also be a ruling class so reasonable and shrewd as to understand how the forms of domination are a matter of little importance and the essential is to secure domination. This happened to the English aristocratic classes, which, abandoning the ballast of their own political

organization in due time, were able to keep themselves aloft and encountered flabby, uncertain, timid and without enthusiasm revolutionaries, established a kind of compromise with them, the foundations of which they were roughly the following: accepting the aristocratic classes to introduce into the legislation most of the reforms demanded by the revolutionaries, on condition that, in their own interest, they maintain social hegemony. Thus for forty years the historical movement that started the initiative of social reforms from the ruling aristocratic class and gave England its present liberal and philanthropic legislation unfolded uninterruptedly.

With what result? we ask ourselves. The conduct of the English ruling classes appears in the eyes of a conservative of the Duke Gualtieri mold, of an authentic conservative, that is, who believes in hierarchies, in the immortality of the soul, in the sanctity of the pope and in the virtues of the ... duchesses, the masterpiece of conservative politics. Nor can this be denied. The English aristocratic classes have succeeded in instilling in the masses the concept of their own superiority and in making all of England the conservative nation par excellence. Emerson could rightly say: the structure of English society is aristocratic. The tastes of the people are conservative. In an article on the British Liberal Party we read the following: "No nation has the sentiment of social hierarchy as tenacious as England; no people possess to such an extent what an editor of the *Daily Chronicle* recently called: the sense of inferiority". This is mathematically correct. In the entertainments organized by the *Primrose League* the workers go hunting for the smiles of the lovely ladies and take a feeling of pride in certain small preferences that are used to them. Therefore it is not surprising that in the monthly report of the Independent Labor Party, of January 1899, it could be read: "revolutionism in this country is but a sentence". Hyndmann, renouncing the militant socialist policy, noted with pain: "in this country the workers have no class spirit." And Bernstein observed that although England presents all the conditions for a socialist

transformation, this seems very unlikely, considering that the workers do not show the slightest desire to undertake it.

It is necessary to understand the extent of all these phenomena. We have seen how England troubled the same problems in the first quarter of the nineteenth century as France in the last quarter of the eighteenth. How is it that the solution given to those problems is so different in the two countries? Certainly various factors were at work to produce different results in the two countries, but one was also the different attitude of the revolutionary parties on both sides of the Channel, the Jacobins of France and the radicals of England. Mind you. No less than the ruling classes of the United Kingdom, and perhaps even more, those of France were willing to make substantial concessions, as long as the management of the state remained in their hands. But while the French Jacobins, faithful to the genius and traditions of their people, refused any compromise, the English radicals only sought the path of compromise. Revolutionary party since around 1840, the radical-chartist-liberal coalition expects its successes from the results of simple class agreements and compromises.

Free radicals-swingers entrust the success of their initiative to the conservative Peel. The semi-socialist Chartists see the possibility of their triumph in the advent of Gladstone, the conservative turned liberal for reasons of personal vanity and mystical inclinations of the soul.

At this point the transformation of the radical-chartist core from a revolutionary party to a reformist party is complete. It no longer attacks the state, but wants to penetrate it; it no longer wants to dispossess the ruling class of political power, but wants to participate in it; he no longer wants to act against the public powers, but to change the legislation through the existing state, that is, with the consent of the ruling classes. The fundamental constitution of the state also remains monarchical-aristocratic, as long as certain advantages are accorded to the industrial and working class. The very tactics of our reformist socialists!

Already the radical-liberals do not touch power by the victorious effort of the classes they represent, but by the conversion of the dominant factions. Before the electoral reform of 1866, the radical-liberal party did not govern with determined principles of internal politics, but largely of foreign and financial policy. The electoral reform of 1866 is due to a conservative ministry (Disraeli). Only after the electoral reform of 1866, which amends without destroying the old and grotesque English electoral organism, did the industrial bourgeoisie, united with the workers, manage to have a majority of its own in the lower house. But the workers fail to have full satisfaction of their demands; this is the fact that perpetuates domination. moral of the English aristocracy and ensures that a night of August 4 of the noble titles never took place in England. Mind you. The shyness of the revolutionary element (bourgeois-worker) acting in the three distinct movements of free-trade chartism and the *Trades-Unions* and the opportune concessions of the ruling classes, prevent a revolution in the state, which transfers political domination to other classes. . The rupture of the radical bourgeoisie with the workers and the subsequent alliance of the workers with the conservative aristocracy, perpetuate the aristocratic government of society and the moral hegemony of the noble classes, which constitutes the living anachronism of English society. The law on strikes allowed the alliance, later reconfirmed at intervals many times, between the conservative aristocracy and the revolutionary working class, to the detriment of radical bourgeois politics. In 1871 the strike was declared free, but many and such cases of attacks on the freedom of work had been created, so that practically the freedom to strike existed on paper. Seven women had even been condemned who, at the passage of some *krumiri*, had shouted, according to the indictment: bah! The parliamentary committee of the *Trades-Unions* demanded the repeal of the law 1871; Gladstone held out. He represented the industrial bourgeoisie, most directly concerned with restrictions on the right to strike. This was the signal of the abandonment of the liberals by the workers, who

had marched for half a century of accord with the former. The aristocratic-conservative party understood the move and made the workers' claim their own. After all, the abolition of the law of 1871 would have affected only the industrialists. Landowners had little to fear. In fact, the Conservative party kept the promise. In 1874 the law of 1871 was abolished. And so it became fashionable to contrast the moderation of the English workers' unions with the turbulence of the workers of the continent. What a marvel! The workers of the continent wanted to take possession of the old machinery of the state by means of their own men in order to use it in accordance with their own exclusive interests; the workers of the United Kingdom left it in the hands of the landed aristocracy, more or less allied with the industrial bourgeoisie, and limited their demands to change the form of the existing law. And so while the French workers had had the right of suffrage since 1848 and the German workers since 1867, the English workers were only able to achieve a timid and reluctant electoral reform in 1884, which, while its aim was to definitively eliminate the absurdities of the old organization English electoral, barely amended in 1867, excluded from the first day of its operation, as many as 1,800,000 English adult workers from the right to vote, and for the complex of its provisions made the theoretical conquest of the lower house by the organized proletariat almost inconceivable. . These were the results of the compromise policy.

The history of the British Radical Party and the formidable failure of its policy throws sufficient light on a problem that has, recently, strained the attention of the International Socialist Party. When in June 1899, the lawyer Millerand, hitherto a member of the French socialist parliamentary group, agreed to be part of the bourgeois-liberal ministry, chaired by Waldeck-Rousseau, the socialists of all civilized countries wondered: is it useful for a socialist enter a bourgeois government? As can be seen, this calculation had already been done before by other classes, by other parties, and in different historical conditions. The British radicals participated in conservative governments, without in the least proposing to modify the aristocratic-

monarchical structure of society. And when they did not participate in the government, they made claims that they were happy to see accepted by the actual conservatives. The result was that they never saw their political program fully implemented, which had been able to triumph in other countries as well.

They set themselves from the point of view from which the current reformist socialists stand: the reforms are important and not the way in which they are implemented, the legislative modification and not the instrument of modification. From this attitude of the English radicals, who passed from revolutionaries to reformists, then arose those various idioms that delight the conservative phraseology of half of Europe: the essential being the socialist reform and not the political - form under which it is implemented. Now here's what these claims mean.

Are the reforms important and not the political form under which they are implemented? This simply means that it does not matter that one social class rather than another holds power. If the good is accepted everywhere, so much so that it allows itself to be done by the ruling class; but so much so that the domination of a social class is perpetuated. Now the experiment of England proves how the landed aristocracy fits very well with constitutional and parliamentary forms of domination, and how it has managed to exclude an entire and complete government of the bourgeois class, such as is seen to exist in France, for example, in the United States of America, the Australian colonies and Switzerland, he hopes to do the same with the working class. Who tells us that the bourgeois class is not capable of taking the initiative of a collectivist organization of production? The essential is exploitation and not the form of exploitation; and a unitary regime of production, implying a rigid system of coordination and subordination of men, could lend itself to the exploitation of the mass, even better than a capitalist regime, when political power remained in the hands of the bourgeois class, which, even accepting a such a radical transformation of economic systems would preserve for itself the executive office of society and therefore the possibility of living parasitically.

Certainly the English aristocratic class was able to maintain managerial functions in a society that had different bases from those on which noble dominance was spontaneously established. The policy of compromises in which it has been able to excel, has meant that it has been able to maintain the moral and political dominion of society when economic dominance had escaped it. Those who declare reforms essential and not the forms in which they take place, also consider the continued political domination of a class as something of no importance. Therefore *we allocate the reformist party among the conservative parties, inasmuch as the reformist party tends to maintain the political domination of the class from which it asks for reforms.*

It is from this point of view that the participation of a socialist in power must be judged. The traditional conservative party now distinctly understands the need to make concessions to the proletarian classes, provided of course this does not at all imply the need to hand over the rule of the state into the hands of the proletariat. The Duke Gualtieri's writing on conservative evolution is undoubtedly symptomatic. But he warns that "the resistance of the conservatives against socialist ideas must be vigilant, tenacious, continuous" but he also says that "progress cannot be prevented". In his opinion, the conservatives must take over a large part of the socialist program and "with appropriate and moderate reforms" prevent the fundamental principles of society from being discussed. Conservatives throughout Europe, he advises, must follow the example of the English ruling classes "who, acting with great wisdom, and skillfully and appropriately conceding, have discredited and rendered socialism impotent." "It is necessary, he adds in the following, in form and substance to modify institutions and laws, to apply the principles somewhat differently and to limit or extend the exercise of some right that derives from those principles. Conservatives cannot delude themselves about the need to allow these modifications". This aristocratic conservative understood the essence of domination. A class does not already dominate because it maintains a certain

set of laws, but because whatever these laws are, it is *the one that applies them*. Political domination is the fact of the material and ideological direction of society. The laws perish, as long as the class that produced them are saved! That conservatives do not care for empty forms; grant whatever is asked; the more they concede, the less necessary a substitution of classes in power will appear.

Therefore the participation of a man of another class in power is a practical means which the ruling classes use to demonstrate how their domination is reconcilable with the needs of the dominated classes. The English aristocracy, experimenting with this remedy in the face of the radical bourgeoisie, managed to preserve its social hegemony and prevent the full success of the bourgeois political forms, so that today in Europe England shows the unique example of a country, which, in the most luxuriant flowering of its industrial evolution, it leaves the traditional forms of aristocratic domination to exist and is still pervaded by the moldy ideology of the feudal classes. With the opportune renunciation of past forms, the English aristocracy knew how to preserve to itself the moral dominion of society.

The reformist parties, awaiting the implementation of the reforms by the existing state and therefore by the classes that hold power, concur to ensure the domination of these classes and, by spurring them to rejuvenate themselves, they keep the dominated class further and further away from the exercise of power. Epper in an ideal division of parties, the reformist parties of any kind (with religious, economic or political tendencies must be classified among the conservative parties. The discriminative basis of the parties can be traced in the aim of preserving the current social group in power, and therefore the existing form of the state, the reformists, as we have defined the reform, and for how many radical innovative projects they advocate, they must place themselves in the category of conservatives. Against which the revolutionaries stand on the one hand and the reactionaries on the other. As for the reactionary parties, it is easy to grasp the

characteristics that differentiate them from revolutionaries and conservatives.

Let us recall the encyclical "*Quanta cura*" by Pius IX, from which the *Syllabus* emerged. That encyclical and that catalog are the code of reaction. A quick glance at their content makes us understand what a reactionary movement is and therefore a reaction party. In the encyclical "Quanta cura" Pius IX contrasts, so to speak, medieval society with modern society. It is the cry of anguish of a dying man who turns his gaze back to consider life dying out. He defines the fundamental error of our societies for "naturalism", that is, for the erroneous opinion according to which "the best organization of government and civil progress absolutely demand that human society be constituted and governed without taking into account religion" and that the the best government is not, on the other hand, that which feels its first duty "to repress violators of the Catholic religion". From this false idea of government derives the other that "freedom of conscience and religion is a right of every man". In political matters, the error consists in believing "that the supreme authority entrusted by Christ to the Church must be subjected to civil authority". Conversely, Catholic dogma is "the full power divinely granted by Christ to the pope to shepherd, govern and govern the universal Church". Thus to the secular state founded on freedom of religion and the superiority of civil power, the Encyclical opposes the ideal of the Catholic state based on complete dependence on ecclesiastical - power and on obligatory unity of faith. The *Syllabus*, then, or catalog of the main errors of our age, reproduces in a negative and summary form all the doctrines condemned by Pius IX and which are the same ones that comprise the principles on which our civilization is founded.

Now what do all the claims of the Church represent if not the attempt to regain powers that had escaped the Church and, or had fallen to the State, or had fallen into the patrimony of the citizens? And therefore we define reactionary any attempt to restore to a power, which had lost them, rights, prerogatives and

faculties which, either have passed into the general domain of the individuals making up a community, or have been the fate of another power, which has risen from ruin. of that . We find the classic form of reactionary attempts in clerical society, which still strives to revive an empire that other opposing forces have managed to take away from it. But those parties are no less reactionary, which intend to restore to the State rights that it has abandoned and that have been taken away from it, as well as those of unions on the opinions of others, etc., but on the economical management of society. What is state socialism (of the chair) if not an attempt to revive the already waning medieval *constraint*? Over the course of centuries the State has intervened with prescriptions, regulations, ordinances and laws in the private and economic life of citizens. The new name does not hide the old thing, and I will try to revive these old forms of state intervention from our apparently reactionary conscience. Later we will prove how the school of critical communism of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels moves resolutely in another direction and how only by a vague analogism can an ideal link be established between the State Socialism of Wagner, Schmoller, Bismark and Lassalle, and the democratic and anti-state socialism of the various revolutionary schools.

Having thus established the differentiation notes of the conservative, reformist, reactionary and revolutionary parties and having noticed how - *brevitatis causa* - we can speak of conservative parties by including the reformist parties without scruple, it remains to make a very important observation. And it is that around every great current of social ideas the division of parties just described is reproduced. Hence, for example, both within Christianity and within socialism, three different directions are formed which move in the reactionary conservative and revolutionary sense. Social ideas, examined in comparison with their ideal content and no longer in references to the political constitution of the state, often arouse the illusion of a fundamental unity which they lack. In the case of socialism, which we are about to study, it will be easy to see how different

things stand under the common envelope. Hence the division of tendencies in the bosom of socialism will appear to us to derive from a fundamental discrepancy, no less invisible than it is very profound. And socialism, in its various forms and tendencies, far from appearing to us as a single innovating force of existing society, will take on the appearance of a verbal envelope under which currents, so conservative of the present society, are hidden. as dissolvers, and dissolvers in a double sense both in the progressive and revolutionary one and in the regressive and reactionary one. Of this in the following chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

Conservatives and Revolutionaries in the Socialist Party

The socialist "ideal", like all ideals, is by no means revolutionary. It is not revolutionary in the sense that it necessarily implies the destruction of the present form of the state; nor in the other, more vague and indeterminate, which aims at the dispossession of the bourgeois class not only of its social dominance, but above all of its capital. The ideal of socialism becomes revolutionary only when its realization is sought in a certain way, which still remains to be defined.

The ideal of socialism is perfectly compatible with a society, the foundations of whose economic distribution remain the current ones. Socialism - in its meaning - common means a mode of economic organization, in which the private enterprise has almost totally disappeared and the management of almost all the means of production is entrusted to the representatives of society as everything, which has become the exclusive owner of the means of production. But nothing prevents us from admitting that the managers of production, that is the representatives of the common property, exercise a social power that is remarkably linked to that exercised by the current capitalists and this not only by directing and organizing production technically, but by levying a tribute on total production. , more or less disguised, which would reproduce, worsened, the ancient and hypothetically abolished capitalist profit. In pure hypothesis this is very possible.

But the second and most serious observation to make is the following. The personnel of the directors and organizers of production could indeed be recruited from the current capitalist class. Indeed, in all likelihood, it would be difficult for people to recruit elsewhere. An example is worth in this regard. When it comes to carrying out certain grandiose public works (railway

constructions, aqueducts, etc.) it is already known that only a small number of industrial companies can take on the work of the company. And this less because the mass of capital to be used is always considerable and cannot be available to any capitalist company, but because a small number of economic undertakings, two or three for each country, already have a beautiful and well-formed necessary technical organization (senior technical staff, administration, low staff already recruited, and so on) that can start the work out of the blue. Thus in Italy it happens that the companies already operating the railway companies are the same ones that monopolize the railway constructions and the only ones that can take on the construction of aqueducts, major national roads, etc. Of the small circle of capitalists it can be said that it alone truly possesses the aptitudes and personnel capable of organizing national production on a unitary footing of public enterprise. It is in fact very unlikely that the working class could in one moment produce the personal skills and administrative organization necessary to start and develop such a vast enterprise. And there, in the meantime, lies the whole great unknown of the future socialist revolution.

A unitary regime of production (collectivism) in which the social dominance remained with the current bourgeois class would be neither more nor less than the continuation of the capitalist regime and would soon reproduce its aspects. Salaries, bonuses, ordinary and extraordinary assignments could very easily not only reach, but exceed the mass of current profits and revenues, which, moreover, in conditions of free competition, are contained within the limits of their objective convenience and ease. offers to capitalist accumulation tend to be reduced to very modest reasons. Indeed this same element, now well-known and accepted, of the constant fall in rents and profits, one of the drawbacks, for capitalists, of the regime of free competition, which the capitalists try to make impossible with tariffs, prizes and monopolies, could actively push the capitalist class to attempt the remedies of expropriations and socializations provided that in this way the rents and profits were saved. In fact,

on the basis of unitary production it would be very easy to organize a system of rigorous monopolies which would make it possible to artificially raise the prices of many capitalist services. Socialism conceived as a means to consolidate the capitalist regime is certainly a fallback no more surprising than the use that the privileged classes in their interests were able to make of the egalitarian organization of the Christian church. It is not our fault that history admirably delights in traps, deceptions and ironic and cruel snares.

Is there an interest of the bourgeois class to socialize and collectivize? The question may seem strange, but the affirmative answer is intuitively evident. This interest not only exists, it already operates. Capitalist socialism is not a fact of the future, but of the obvious present. Just look around you to notice. What is the current municipalization fever except a manifestation of the capitalist need to socialize and collectivize? In Germany, to cite one example among many, almost all parties are, to a greater or lesser extent, municipalisers. The German People's Party, the very monarchical German Social Reform Party, the *National-sozial Verein*, the Land Reform Party were the municipalizers. In Italy, the legal initiative of municipalization was taken by the most varied conservative parties. The municipalities are then officially entered into law with the Giolitti project of 1902.

In Saredo's concluding report (and remember that Saredo was President of the Council of State, that is, the conservative body par excellence and definition of a modern state), a whole series of audacious municipalizations were proposed on the administrative conditions of the city of Naples. Montemartini, in his extensive study on the municipalization of public services, explains the reasons why the class of land and house owners is in favor of municipalization; and his remarks could easily multiply and extend to other capitalist classes. As far as nationalizations are concerned, remember the fury with which the Swiss bankers urged the passage to the state of the railways of their country. In our country, the railway companies have not opposed any campaign to the projects for the nationalization of railway

operations. One of these companies, *Adriatica*, owner of a fairly extensive network, has actively worked to obtain the ransom. Moreover, it is obvious that at a certain stage of the economic development of their individual enterprises the capitalists must want the State to expropriate them by capitalizing their average incomes, which thus remain insured for ever, while economic practice teaches, how capitalist incomes fluctuate, and on average, the favorable and unfavorable contingencies cancel out. And yet statisations such as municipalizations, which are just as many experiments of socialism, coincide admirably with the interest of the capitalist classes, if not always with those of the collectivity.

We must not be surprised by all this. The example of England, about which we have the richest information, shows what an active debt instrument for public bodies are municipalities. According to Fowler's studies, the debt encountered in England for municipalities amounts to 43.5 of the total debt of the English communities. Anyone who measures the current fury of municipalities must ask with horror what limits local debts will reach. Now, debt means: capitalist means advanced against interest from private savers, or again: demand for private savings against remuneration. The public body assures the private capitalist, without the latter participating in the enterprise's stake, an average income for the entire time during which the amortization takes place. Therefore, municipalizations and statisations act in a double way to the benefit of capitalist rents: on the one hand, by reducing savings and therefore allowing the price of its services for free employment to rise; and on the other hand by permanently ensuring an income for certain capitals, which otherwise would have remained "unemployed". But it does not take too long to foresee that in a more or less close period even local debts will be consolidated and will become irredeemable. The ease with which they contract, the fury of the interests that push to municipalize, will mean that the municipalities will no longer be able to bear the amortization quotas and the local debt will give rise to a new kind of great

book. The capitalist classes will have ensured, without effort or worry of any kind, a certain income. As for the eventuality of a reduction in guaranteed interest, two provisions serve to mitigate the danger: the first is that the fury of the municipalities will progress to an extent that is certainly greater than the accumulation of private savings; the second that the *Malthusianism of savings* will also have to intervene in an era in which the individual responsibility of the saver, who is no longer interested in the company and therefore proportionally decreasing the mass of municipal capital, will have to increase the remuneration, and will thus remain contained the demagogical fury of conversions.

At this point a second and more dangerous factor intervenes in the evolution towards socialism. In a period of time when crisis and speculation continually threaten capitalist income, a state of mind favorable to the experiences of socialism could also form among the capitalist class. Furthermore, consider that the possibility of controlling a unitary regime of production must appear infinitely greater than it is in a private regime of competition. However, it must not appear as a paradoxical project to many capitalists that the interests of the capitalist class could better guarantee themselves when all production was centralized in the hands of society, and the collective management of the socialized economic company was entrusted to the current components of the capitalist class or to their heirs. It would then become a capitalist interest to solicit socialist solutions, provided that this happened in this way, that is, that the direction and administration of society fell to the current members of the capitalist class and that the expropriation of private capitalists was accomplished with the rule of the principle of compensation. In this case, and if this program could be realized, the forms of capitalist domination would be changed, but the domination of the capitalist class would last.

The validity of this danger seems to be hardly evident in the eyes of the socialists, who owe considerable advantages in the understanding and knowledge of subsequent historical and

political situations to the generalization of the way of seeing historical materialism; but also not a few prejudices. Bernstein examined the "pitfalls" of the dialectical method to show how many times Marx and Engels were victims of their system of investigation. The same research could be extended to actual historical materialism. And perhaps then it might become clear that the use of this means of investigation and orientation, both in the vulgar and in its most critical sense, can lead to notable consequences and not a few errors in practical politics. Certainly, I will note by way of accident, the excessive inclination towards the parliamentary and legalistic systems, to which the primary cause of the present socialist degeneration must be traced, was to a small extent provoked by the materialistic preconception of the gradual and inevitable passages, which 'they would implement beyond any abrupt voluntary and preconceived intervention, or abbreviated and brisk, in historical evolution

According to an obvious and vulgar canon of historical materialism, the domination of a class would not be possible except under certain political and social forms, and not outside of these. There would be only one mode of political existence for each class; hence the disappearance of this manner would either provoke or would be the index of the cessation of the dominance of a particular class. Outside its traditional historical ground, a class could not survive. It is this belief that makes practical advocates of socialism overly optimistic. They think that with the disappearance of private production, the social prevalence of the bourgeoisie and most likely all forms of social exploitation would disappear. It is my opinion that this theory very misleadingly indicates the nature of class domination and the objective conditions in which it is maintained.

Dominion is not a formal fact, but a substantial one, that is, it is exercised because it is exercised, and not because it is exercised in a certain way. As for class government, it consists neither in the monarchical nor in the republican state, but in the fact of a group of men who exercise political industry in their own interest. We must be convinced that there are no social

forms, which automatically exclude class government, nor others which automatically make it necessary. The problem goes much deeper. The essence of domination is a difference in personal qualities. In the primitive *gens* there can be a formally monarchical constitution and substantial exclusion of dominion in full democratic regime, the elected of the most spontaneous suffrage, or - in a system of direct democracy on the rather fantastic model of Rittinghausen - the spontaneous directors of public opinion (speakers, journalists, writers) can very easily constitute a small oligarchy of masters and exploiters. Nothing prevents that as at a certain stage of economic evolution the capitalists may have an interest in socialist solutions, they may also feel a moral interest in directing and taking over the socialist movement and then in the future social organization based on the hypothetical principles of socialism. The essence of bourgeois domination is neither the wage-earner nor the authoritarian constitution of the political society (state); but the fact of the levying of a tax on the work of some men by others and the exercise of political enterprise in the sense of guaranteeing that levy. Now that such a withdrawal can be made under the communist regime, of course, in pure hypothesis, it is clearly possible. Just think of the inevitable extension that the "imposed voice" will have to take into a unitary regime of production, where every way of satisfying personal needs will have to assume the character of a public enterprise. That the state can survive alongside the unitary regime of production, which means precisely a mechanism of laws and men organized in view of the guarantee of special group interests, no wonder. Beware of the fury with which the most watered-down socialists fight the anti-state ideas of the anarchists and radical socialists. If, therefore, the current bourgeois class were able to secure control of the future socialist society, the private method of economic production could cease, but the bourgeois form of distribution could persist (levy of a tax on the work of others, guaranteed by the authoritarian organization of public interests).

In the fact that the bourgeois class would retain its social dominance in a socialist society, there is certainly nothing more surprising than, for example, the Austrian feudal and aristocratic class (- not to resort to the even more plastic and evident of Russian society -) has managed to maintain its social dominance in full swing. of free wage earners and constitutionalist organization of the state. As the aristocratic classes of various European countries, and of the more civilized, for example, Germany, Austria and England, in different degrees and forms, have saved their dominion in the full triumph of the capitalist methods of producing, it should not appear. strange that the bourgeois class could keep its social domination in full socialist rule.

Nor is it devoid of meaning, indeed it is pregnant with sure indications with respect to the historical function, the social value, of the so-called *reformist socialism*, that the coryphs of this tendency try to demonstrate how between socialism, also understood in the most radical way, and the bourgeois society, indeed between socialism and the current interests of the bourgeoisie, there is no conflict. In his studies on individual property, the Grysostom of reformist socialism, the great courtly consultant of socialist degeneration, Giovanni Jaures, endeavors to give the greatest evidence to the thesis that individual property has nothing to do with bourgeois property. But this very true thesis (Marx had precisely shown how capitalist property results from the expropriation of the immediate producer and therefore presupposes the negation of private property) is placed in the service of a highly opportunist policy: the demonstration that capitalists must not hinder socialist solutions. "Actually, he writes, and to take things as a whole and from above, individual property does not exist. in France. No individual has an entire right there to dispose of his fortune. Under the discipline of succession law, each owner is less an owner than a custodian. He holds a family-shaped, capitalist-based class property on deposit. It is to the indefinite series of generations, of which the State defends and represents the right, and not precisely to the

individual, that what the latter calls his fortune". First he discovered that the tax, equal in France to one fifth of the national wealth, creates a public property, in which the whole nation is interested. Destroying the wealth of individuals means, according to Jaurès, creating the wealth of ... totality. Taking the path of such discoveries, he establishes that from the beginning of the expropriation it is bourgeois and capitalist); but then, realizing the bad pace, he wants to establish that socialist expropriation will be something else, and this does not seem, in truth, too evident; much less so that immediately afterwards he opines that "nothing prevents us from imagining how the current owners of the property receive, for example, during a certain period, an assignment on the products of collectivist production". Of this, however, it matters little. What is essential to note is the effort made by the reformist camps to demonstrate the principle identity between the socialist solution and capitalist society and the consequence of capitalism's interest in the triumph of socialism. Jaurès is indefatigable in this demonstration. Interesting, for example, from the point of view in which we currently find ourselves, are the observations he makes regarding the plan of the Home Rule outlined by Gladstone: "It is the extreme limit, he says, of bourgeois law, an intermediate combination between legal expropriation with indemnity and expropriation without indemnity. And it is a striking example of the real dispossession effects that mere change in the forms of ownership can produce. *There is therefore in the bourgeois right of expropriation a latent revolutionary virtue, which events will liberate a little at a time and which will formulate itself in communist and proletarian law*". The interest of this demonstration is twofold it serves to prove the foundation of our thesis on the non-existence of a fundamental antithesis between the interests of the bourgeoisie and socialism; and it is also valid as an indication of the historical value of socialist reformism, which in our eyes is the unconscious form under which the attempt of the bourgeois class presents itself to take over the

socialist movement for the guarantee of its fundamental class interests.

But let's resume our demonstration. The attempt that the bourgeois class could make to remain in its class domination has the natural presupposition that it keeps the political machine in its hands. What we call "social dominance" clearly results from several conditions, including the prevalence of the opinions and moral judgments of a class, but above all in the possession it exercises of the political machine. There is no social dominance of one class when the state is in the hands of another class. The state is the coercive body par excellence. How could the opinions, judgments, interests of one class prevail when another class had the instrument of coercion and violence in its hands and for this reason was able to impose its own arbitrariness? The predominant conservative moment of the interests of a class is, therefore, the remaining in the hands of this class of the political machine. His constant effort consists in defending the political structure of the state and in involving the largest number of citizens in its defense. However, it will elect the broadest and most radical administrative and economic reforms in due course, because in this way the seizure of political power by the subject classes is postponed or partially useless. Democracy, for example, as the typical political form of involvement of all classes of society in the preservation of existing political institutions, is precisely the political form in which the bourgeois class establishes its dominion. Its attempt to interest the proletariat and the socialist party in the democratic institutions is the most shrewd attempt to consolidate its own class domination. And as this attempt meets the full favor of reformist socialism, it reflects a new light on the bourgeois nature of this movement.

A ruling class will be scarcely concerned with the consequences and scope of the proposed reforms. The essential thing for it is to preserve not the traditional and historical forms of domination, but the dominion itself, that is, the state. Epper that guise of socialism, which prefers administrative and economic reforms to aggression against the state, must precisely

qualify as conservative socialism. Reformism is another term for social conservation. And so precisely, more than half a century ago, the *Communist Manifesto* defined conservative socialism: "A second, less systematic, but more practical form of socialism sought to prevent the working class from any revolutionary political change, but only a change in material conditions, in economic relations, were to the advantage. But by mutation of the material relations of life this socialism does not mean the abolition of bourgeois relations of production, which is possible only by revolutionary means, but administrative improvements, which naturally take place on the basis of these relations of production, and therefore do not change anything. to the ratio of capital to wage labor, but, at best, they reduce the cost of its rule to the bourgeoisie and simplify its administration ". In reality, the struggle between conservatives and revolutionaries, within the socialist party, takes on the aspect of a struggle for the prevalence of political reform over economic activity, as the revolutionaries claim, or economic over political reform. as the reformists claim. And it is an ancient struggle.

It is singular that, for example, the Parisian workers, with their infallible revolutionary instinct, refused to follow the utopian socialism of Fourier and Saint-Simon and gave all their sympathy to the bourgeois republicans, because they were revolutionaries. They affiliated with their secret societies and climbed the barricades with the bourgeois republicans. The utopian socialism of this epoch, despite its egalitarian and communist tendencies, was above all peaceful. Instead of entering into struggle with the capitalists, the utopians of socialism strove to convert them. They ignored the class struggle. They condemned strikes and any political agitation, especially if revolutionary. Order in the streets was their nightmare. The repugnance of the workers for this kind of economic socialism was therefore quite natural. Instead, Marx and Engels took another path. They are the first two European socialists who defended strikes, the first in the *Condition of the Working Classes in England*, published in 1845, the second in the *Misery*

of Philosophy, published on the eve of the revolution of 1848. they propose politically revolutionary and basically anti-state action to the workers. The economism of the utopian socialists is overwhelmed by the success of the political socialism of Marx and Engels.

The legalitarian pacifism of the utopian socialists was then naturally consecrated by the adoration they had for the state. Speaking of the Saint-Simonian principle, Bazard wrote: "il consiste à transporter à l'Etat, devenu association des travailleurs, le droit d'heritage, aujourd'hui renfermé dans la famille domestique". But the state was what it is now and it shouldn't be touched at all. It would have arranged and organized; it would direct and administer. For now, workers should beware of any aggression against the state. For now the workers have to do nothing but the economy. It is therefore not surprising that the Saint-Simonian doctrine inspired almost all the work of the typical representative of German feudal socialism, Rodbertus. Andler very well notes the coincidence between the ideas of Rodbertus and Saint-Simon. In Rodbertus the same abhorrence of political transformations, the same adoration for the state, which will then make German academic socialism and social reform in that country so proverbially indigestible. In his letters and opinions, published by Meyer, he conceives the State as "a great social providence" alone capable of creating a "universal society of free and equal men" and in which all "individual aptitudes" will be taken into account. Lassalle, who is himself a disciple of Rodbertus, also possesses this fixation of the state, the aim of which, according to him, is to develop freedom. And here it is interesting to note how the struggle between revolutionaries and conservatives within socialism is reflected by the many nuances that the prevalence of the economic principle can have over the political principle. Lassalle ends up breaking up with his teacher because he wants to remain on the strictly and narrowly economic terrain of the reform, while the former is in favor of political agitation. Except that the political agitation of Lassalle is not really anti-state, but generically democratic and, alongside

certain aims of vague democracy, it defends and caresses the omnipotence of the state. Hence the irreducible antithesis of Lassallian, reforming and democratic practical action, with Marxist, revolutionary and anti-state practical action. Marx, in fact, always judged laxalism as an appendage of Bismark's politics, which, having some audacious vision of administrative reform, was then politically backward and narrowly conservative.

It can be said, in general, that the conservative classes are not at all afraid of the most radical economic reforms and fear only attacks on the political constitution of the state. The page intellectuals of Italic reformism have blurted out economic action as specific to the socialist party and have honestly discredited as petty-bourgeois democratism the greater importance assigned to political transformations. How do they explain the fact that the conservative classes remain impassive in the face of economic-administrative reforms and fear only political upheavals, especially in the fundamental constitution of the state? What rich lessons could be drawn from a careful study of the whole practical and theoretical action of social bismarkism! The theorists of the purest political reactionaryism, the champions of God, the King and the Fatherland, the most resolute advocates of the laws of exception. against *social democracy* they become the most radical zealots of social reform. Gerlach, Hubner, Wagener, Meyer, (the latter later passed to a concept very close to that of socialist democracy), the most prominent queues of the university and of politics begin to engineer plans for social reforms. , in which audacity is barely paid for by the naivety of the conception. From that Hubner who proposes to raise wages and depress profits, by means of special means. arbitration commissions; to the stately councilor Wagener, a personal friend of the old William, who borders on collectivism and almost is about to give in, to Rodbertus, who is a very determined and convinced collectivist, we are faced with a whole variety of doctrines, opinions and systems which leave nothing to be desired in terms of economic radicalism. And also has its value the observation of Andler, with regard to the

socialism of Rodbertus (which socialism, as we mentioned, goes as far as the theoretical formulation of collectivism), that it “represents the true German governmental tradition, conservative, but which allows itself to be pushed to reform, authoritarian, but with a rare concern for individual destinies”. He means that the essence of conservatism is not to be found in resistance to economic mutations, but rather to political novations.

And this, moreover, must appear plausible from what we wrote in the first chapter of this work. State is synonymous with the possession of social supremacy by any class. As long as this class has the state in its hands it will exercise the already defined supremacy and enjoy all the advantages. The essential thing for this class is to hold political power, and not to defend some special privileges. What really undermines its supremacy is the attack on the state constitution, because this means an attempt to dispossess the ruling class of social supremacy. Thus it happens that the ruling class bargains and more or less negotiates with all the subversive parties, but treats the anarchist party with the most decisive rigor, as the one that undermines any constitution of the state undermines the existence of any ruling class, and does not hide its open hostilities towards the revolutionary socialists, such as those who targeting their attacks above all the bourgeois state, jeopardize the existence of the domination of the bourgeois class, while instead its sympathies are all for the reformist socialists, who also defend projects of decisive economic subversivism .

Except that the gradual development of ideas, as a revolutionary political fraction leads to the extreme limit of subversivism, gradually forces a formally reformist and implicitly conservative fraction to retreat to those ideas which represent the ideal patrimony of the officially conservative classes and forces little by little. once, that reformist fraction to renounce all its plans for social renewal. Thus the faction of reformist socialism is gradually led to formulate a set of principles in which, from the very last memory of the ideally revolutionary

tradition of socialism, is extinguished. Look, for example, at the formulation that Millerand makes of the principles of the so-called reformist socialism. Socialism gradually fades in that enunciation to the limits of an indecisive and vacuous philanthropism. "Il veut, egli scrive del suo socialismo, que dans l'humanité nouvelle, la propriété individuelle soit non pas supprimé - ce qui est une proposition incompréhensible - mais tout au contraire transformée et si bien élargie qu'elle soit pour chaque

homme comme son prolongement naturel et nécessaire sur les choses, l'indispensable outil de vie et de développement "; these words are painstakingly bundled with the simple rule of a grammatical process, and which lack any precise doctrinal and logical meaning. Then he condemns the makers of utopias, that is, as he explains, all those who give their efforts a specific goal. In the clouds of its very comfortable political uncertainty, socialism becomes a vast building regulation with the aim of making the world more "habitable with the subsequent disappearance of social inequity" which there is no conservative and resolute reactionary who does not want to promote and implement.

The logical method of Millerand, of an unreachable advocate rascality, consists in baptizing all ideas, which up to now have been the legacy of the bourgeoisie, as socialistic, and in imagining an interest of the proletariat in the preservation of those political systems, which hitherto keep the bourgeois regime on its feet. The speech he gave to the electors on December 3, 1902 is interesting in this respect. He demands that the socialist workers be good patriots, and whispers down a whole series of cautious propositions such as these "il (proletariat) ne saurait arriver au but qu'il s'est donné, ou pour être plus exact, que les conditions mêmes de sa naissance et de son développement lui ont assigné, sans tenir compte de son milieu. Il est de son temps et de son pays; il en partage les faiblesses et les grandeurs ". Previously he explained that: "l'intérêt national, la solidarité des classes ... sont des questions

dont un socialiste a le droit de se soucier". Then he summons the workers to defend, together with all the other social classes, what he calls "la stabilité, la prospérité, indipéndice national, sous toutes leurs formes". This is not enough for him; he wants the workers to defend the material order and respect the existing legality: "croit-on, he exclaims in a moment of magnificent indignation, que les travailleurs puissent demeurer indifférents aux troubles que déchirent le pays, se désintéresser du maintien de l'ordre et du respect de la légalité?" . Next, in a great career. The Socialist Party must defend the militarist and patriotic follies of the ruling classes. Listen to him: "oui, les français, tous les français ont un même intérêt à ce que la France soit riche, à ce qu'elle soit forte, forte non seulement de ses alliances, *de sa puissance militaire et financière*, mais aussi du prestige que conquiert devant le monde une grande nation nettement pacifique et résolue a ne mettre jamais sa force qu'au service du droit." After that all that remains is to admire the unsurpassed impudence of the speaker, who, while constructing the model of a patriot, militarist socialist party, friend of order and legality, willing to defend the existing state and to collaborate with the other classes socialists for the achievement of such a noble end ("le parti socialiste dice, est appelé à entrer en relations *et en accord* avec les autres partis démocratiques") advocate affirms: "ainsi se designe et se caracterise nettement la physionomie de la démocratie socialiste, *distinguée de tous les autres partis ...*". Even Pulcinella would admit that this socialist democracy knows the game of the cups like no magician.

So what does the socialism of the reformists boil down to? This worthy Millerand explains amiably. First of all, he says in the preface to his reformist socialism, society must pay its greatest attention to the education of citizens. "L'éducation - states Millerand peregrinely - en ce quelques syllabes est enfermé tout avenir de l'humanité". Then we need to regulate the work of women and children. Then establish health, unemployment, accident insurance and all the rest of the litany. Then we need trade unions and cooperatives, and then other interesting and

revolutionary reforms of this kind. But the workers defend the state! And to do this, let's start by considering that "le désarmement isolé serait pis qu'une folie". Workers must think about guaranteeing national integrity "*par la puissance des armes et la sûreté des alliances*". And now a competent tip to those who explain how this socialism is at odds with the interests of the bourgeoisie.

Consider above all the care with which Millerand tries to inculcate in the working classes their obligation to defend the Republic. Now the Republic is the present form of the State in France, and defending the Republic means defending the existing constitution of the State, that is, the interests of the class that has managed to take over the State. As for the reformists who find themselves acting in a monarchical country, they cannot openly advise the workers to defend the monarchical state; too much still clashes with the traditions of the socialist party. But just as the inevitable historical character of reformism is the defense of the existing state, it obeys the intimate law that moves it indirectly: showing the futility of attacks against the monarchical state. Epper in countries ruled by monarchy the reformists discredit republican solutions, either by trying to show that mere political changes do not matter, or by demolishing the republican minorities. We will see later in the chapter on the present conditions of the Socialist Party in Italy - how Italian reformists have dedicated a considerable part of their activity to this purpose. The diffusion in Italy of a current of antipathy towards the republican party was the surest means by which the reformists of socialism were able to reach their goal of bourgeois preservation.

Nor should we give too much weight to the sympathies that the reformist socialists show for democratic governments. The aim of their action is not to replace the government of the proletariat for the government of the bourgeoisie, but to interest the working classes in the maintenance of the present state, with the participation of the working class in the government of this state. Democracy for them is nothing else. But also perceived as

the attempt to make the working class participate in the government of the present state, is equivalent to an interest in its preservation. But the democratism of reformist socialism, consisting in the penetration into the present state by some representatives of the working class, has a strictly conservative character of the capitalist and bourgeois state.

The Socialist Revolutionaries, on the other hand, attack the political constitution of the state and tend to establish an integral and complete government of the working class there. To achieve this, they do not need to lift the barricades, which are always a passing episode in historical struggles. They act in such a way as to demolish the existing state in the soul of the masses and in the social constitution. They demand and impose those changes which, while increasing the destructive power of the proletariat, diminish the power of resistance of the state. They do not delude themselves that the establishment of the working class in power can be accomplished by replacing the proletarian elements for the bourgeois elements, in which case the state machinery would continue to function as before. They think that it is very difficult for the demolition of the existing political machine to be accomplished by using only this same machine (elections, use of local and central power, handling of the means of persuasion). They do not increase the powers of this State, conferring on it new oppressive authority over individual and social life (system of interventionism, nationalization of industries, etc.), on the contrary they try to reduce them to the minimum possible. They then develop an activity aimed at giving life to all those bodies that will have to replace the state (professional unions, corporations in charge of special public services, etc.). And in the meantime, in practical politics, they exercise a simple office of corrosive criticism towards the public powers; therefore they refuse any participation in the administration of the state, and in the direct form of participation in the government proper (dicasteries), and in the indirect form of support for a determined bourgeois government policy. The work of positive socialist legislation is waiting to begin the day when the working class has

succeeded in breaking up the machine of the bourgeois state. Most likely this day will be preceded by a long period of systematic collective violence, on the model of those that accompanied the French Revolution, but whose duration, occasion and modalities must be considered impossible to specify.

To deplore this possibility, the bourgeoisie must make an attempt at the speculation of socialism. Such an attempt takes place under the guise of socialist reformism. The historical value of this movement is therefore to adapt the impending socialist solutions to the interests of the bourgeois class. However, although the reform movement was born as a spontaneous degeneration of the traditional socialist movement and within it, its social importance is almost exclusively conferred on it by the sympathy with which it was received by the bourgeois class, which, with singular rapidity intuition, he understood all the advantage he could derive from its diffusion. In almost all the more advanced countries, the bourgeoisie has ceased any aggressive attitude towards socialism, thanks precisely to the reformist tendencies that are blossoming within it. The French bourgeoisie, forgetting June 1848 and the Paris Commune, elects the vice-president of the Chamber of Deputies in Jaurès. Count Bülow wishes, in the middle of the *Reichstag*, a Millerand also to the German socialists; and in Italy the typical representative of bourgeois commercialism, painted with modernity, invites Filippo Turati to enter the government. It seems that the palate of the bourgeoisie fits very well with the socialist sauce of the so-called reformism. It would therefore be to slander this tasty ingredient of bourgeois cuisine, to want to pass it off as a revolutionary again.

CHAPTER FIVE

The "Social Reform" and its Parliamentary Mystification

"Von höheren Motiven abgesehen, gebietet also den jetzt herrschenden Klassen ihr eigenes Interesse die Wegräumung aller gesetzlich kontrollierbaren Hindernisse, welche die Entwicklung der Arbeiterklasse hemmen"

Marx – *Kapital*, Vorwort

Understanding now the true notion of socialism is not easy. The practical action of reformist socialism ended up throwing confusion even in the field of theory. When we hear talk of socialism with regard to acts and doctrines that have so much analogy with acts and doctrines, which until now were considered to have nothing in common with the movement of emancipation of the working class, it is easy to understand that one is no longer sure. Not at all. Sorel has shown the strange relationship that exists between Millerandian reformism and "social Christianity"; another French socialist writer, Berth, points to the dangers of confusing "statism" with socialism. This last mistake is much more common, especially in Italy, where by socialism is meant a certain system of passage to the state of private industries. Someone, or more skilled or more foolish, intends to speak precisely of this monarchical, bureaucratic, militarist and police state of Italy. Berth points out that such a concept is in perfect antithesis with the traditional ideas of Marxism. Of the latter he writes: and his ideal (of Marxism) is not the point of substituting for a plurality of individual masters, who even leaves a certain game to freedom, a single collective master, who, by his very uniqueness, would have reason to suppress all freedom; it wants a much deeper and much more essential revolution: to rid the workshop of all capitalist and administrative

protection, to abandon it to the autonomous management of the freely associated workers.

But just as the extreme ideal of reformist socialism seems to be a state management system for industries, so the instrument of this transformation is made to consist in a gradual increase in the powers of the state over society. The so-called social reform, which the reformists intend, is nothing else. Through it, the state subjects the private economic activity of citizens to its own control. The gradual development of this system would lead step by step to socialism. Hence the socialism of the future socialist democracy would be a revival of the old system of interventionism and state monopoly in vogue, for example, in the Byzantium of the 11th century. From this conception tactical systems are born that are no less edifying than instructive. The first categorical imperative that these gentlemen instill in the working class consists in affirming that the working class must carry out all its political activity, not in the sense of replacing the state, gradually removing all functions from it, but by promoting the so-called social legislation and with increasing the powers of the state over society. The socialist revolution will emerge from the accumulation of these successive social reforms. As if all this were not enough, it has been claimed that this was the Marxist conception of socialism. Conversely, I will prove: a) that in the historical system of Marx social legislation is a means not of avoiding, but of hastening, exacerbating the violent conflict of the classes; b) that regardless of this premise, the development of social reform must necessarily lead to a point where, if the dominant form of social organization does not change, the reform itself translates into an impediment to the economic and general progress of society.

In general, the writers of socialism have not tried to deepen the meaning that the so-called social legislation has in the Marxist system, that is, the conscious intervention of the state organization at certain moments of the economic activity of citizens, in the asserted advantage of the working class. Marx highlights the full importance of factory legislation for the

working class. He eloquently extols the effort of the English working class to achieve a normal working day. From this it was concluded that the constant intervention of the state in all relations of economic life was in the direction of Marxist thought. The vulgar theory of socialism has seen in the extension of the sphere subject to state authority many moments of becoming socialist. Now the truth is that Marx was even contrary to the teaching of the state, which can also be justified with some good reason. His distrust of the state was truly remarkable, sometimes exaggerated. Is it to be held that in the case of factory legislation, Marx defected to the informing spirit of his own doctrine and induced himself to recognize an efficacy of state action, which he denied in other fields?

Let us begin by establishing that although Marx is enthusiastic about the struggles waged by the English working class to obtain factory legislation, he is far from recognizing this legislation as absolute value. Speaking of the French law of 1848 on 12 hours of work, and once again showing his preferences for revolutionary action, Marx, while noting the flaws of the French law, writes: "In spite of everything, the French revolutionary method makes its own benefits. At one time, it imposes as a whole the same limit of the working day on all factories and workshops, without exception, while English legislation either on this point or on that one gives way to counteragenicity to the pressure of circumstances and is on the good way to create a new puzzle. This shows that Marx does not really have a very high opinion of English factory law. It is not enough. What he must define the practical advantage that the workers derive from the legislation on the working day, he reduces it to these very modest boundaries: that the worker finally knows "when the time that belongs to him begins and when what he has sold to the capitalist ends". A fairly theoretical and immaterial advantage, as we can see. In a note added to the fourth German edition of *Capital*, and in which he gives an account of the further developments of the law on factories, Engels, in the same spirit of the judgment

dictated by his great friend, skeptically observes that the law on factories has remained largely dead letter.

Yet. And the pseudo-Marxists of Italic reformism should reflect a lot on this circumstance. Marx notes that, although out of a spirit of opposition to novelty, the capitalists first fought the laws on factories, later they had to acknowledge the unreasonableness of their first hostilities. Not only. The capitalists themselves point out that industries subject to the legal limitation of the working day thrive more vigorously than "free" industries. This means that social legislation is not at all a means to contain capitalist exploitation (appropriation of a surplus labor). He writes verbatim: "The same manufacturers, from whom the legal limit and the rule of the working day had to be snatched step by step with a half-century civil war, point to glorious and triumphant the evident contrast between their industries subjected to the legal limit and those still "free". By now the Pharisees of Political Economy declare as a typical achievement of their "Science" the need for a legal limit to the working day ". The industrialists and economists have had to recognize that capitalist profit is not at all compromised by the legislation on factories and have converted to the same legislation.

It is therefore necessary to avoid concluding that Marx saw in social legislation a means to contain capitalist exploitation and therefore prevented in its full development the complete elimination of any and all capitalist exploitation of the worker. This convenient thesis of *state interventionism* is directly anti-Marxist: the whole spirit of the economic doctrine of Karl Marx is opposed to the invasions of state power. So in what, for the Marxist doctrine, would the usefulness of the legislation of the factories consist? Some, misled by a qualification which Marx incidentally attaches to factory legislation, have believed that the efficacy of the latter consisted, according to Marx, in the control established by society over production. In fact, at a certain point in *Capital*, Marx calls the legislation of factories "this first and conscious reaction of society on the natural form of the

production process". In social legislation, Marx would see the victory of the principle that the economic process should no longer be abandoned anarchically to itself, but take place according to an organically established plan. But, while it must be remembered that the legislation on the working day is not a discovery of the nineteenth century, since during the whole pre-capitalist phase there was legislation in this matter and especially in a way hostile to the working classes, the thought of Marx must be placed in connection with the scope that Marx assigns below, as we shall see now, to the legislation on factories, considered not already an instrument of social pacification, but a means of accelerating the decomposition of capitalism, that is, *as a vehicle for a conscious work of destruction*, therefore in a sense opposite to that commonly admitted. But what may be less than clear in these propositions will appear apodictically true in the following things. In this way we will open the way to judge the very new theory of class penetration *from the point of view of Marxism*.

In the *inaugural address of the International*, as indeed in various points of the *Capital*, Marx declares that the bill for the ten hours of work, in addition to being a great practical result, represented the victory of a "principle". What then is this principle? It is easy to see it. What is a *normal* day of work on the basis of capitalist production, Marx declares a more intricate problem than the immortality of the soul. The capitalist bought the manpower; he has the right to enjoy its use throughout the working day. Referring to the law of commodity value, he attempts to extract the greatest possible amount of surplus value from the value of labor power. On the other hand, the worker highlights the special character of the goods he sells. This commodity needs to be renewed to be used. If the capitalist uses labor power for longer than what the worker considers normal, he manifestly violates the law of commodity exchange. As we can see, this dispute is entirely based on *the law in force* and on *contractual freedom*. The principle that the parties invoke is the one sanctioned by bourgeois codes.

But on the basis of this right the problem is insoluble. The economic law of competition and the misery that reigns in the working classes prevent the individual worker from defending his workforce. The freedom to bargain for any length of the working day practically stems from the right of the worker closest to the need to impose an abnormal working day on his comrades. Against what, then, do the workers rise up, and what "principle" triumphs with the limiting laws of the working day? They rise up against "contractual freedom" in matters of working conditions and make the "principle" of respect due to human personality triumph. And in fact later Marx will note that in defense of their own person the workers invoke a social bond that prevents them from selling themselves and their family "*through a free contract stipulated with capital*" until death and slavery. The enemy is the freedom of contract, which allows the worker, constrained by need, to accept all the conditions which the capitalist considers in his interest to impose on the worker. The principle, therefore, which triumphs with the legislation of factories is not the point that it is necessary to subject social production to control and substitute the state for the private producer. Can the reformist gentlemen understand this?

We need to take another step forward. Up to now we have considered factory legislation as a product of an evolution of the consciousness of the working classes. Now we should ask ourselves: what influence does it ever have on the industrial development of a society? Is it also true that the progressive development of factory legislation towards other social reforms gradually leads to socialist society? I state that Marx is convinced that from a certain point onwards capitalist society excludes "any rational improvement" (*jede rationelle Verbesserung*); that is, how it is impossible to speak of this accumulation of reforms that would allow us to pass peacefully from capitalist society to communist society, because indeed capitalist society, having reached a stage of its evolution, would rebel against any further improvement and would impose the need to blow it up. In any case, the Marxian theory of the influences exerted by social

reform is that it generates the ever more indefinable necessity of the violent revolution. Here is how Marx himself expresses his theory in clear and precise terms:

"When the generalization of factory legislation, understood as a means for the physical and moral defense of the working class, has become inevitable, it will universalize and hasten, on the other hand, the transformation of the scattered processes of parcel labor into combined labor processes on large social scale, and therefore the concentration of capital and the absolute domination of the factory regime. It will destroy all traditional or transitional forms, under which the domination of capital is still partially masked today, and will replace them with the direct and manifest domination of capital. Thus the legislation of the factories will also generalize the direct struggle against this domination. While it imposes uniformity, regularity, order and economy in individual factories, it increases the anarchy and catastrophes of capitalist production, the intensity of labor, and the competition of the machines with the worker. By annihilating the legislation of the factories, the spheres of small production and domestic work, it destroys the last refuge of the "supernumeraries" and thus the last safety valve of the whole social mechanism. With the material conditions and the social combination of the production process, it matures the contradictions and antagonisms of its capitalist form, therefore, at the same time, the germinal elements of another society, and the moments of subversion of the old society"

This and nothing else is the mathematical *limit* of social legislation, according to Marx. Far from being a means to achieve social peace, therefore, he considers such invasions of state industriousness in the domain of private activity as a means of exacerbating and hastening the solution of social conflicts. This first reaction to the design of society on the production process, starts from the denial that the working class makes of the traditional law of contract and due to natural developments induces in the working class an awareness of social needs in accordance with its new juridical convictions. And just as these

lead to place the *man* who suffers and protests in the place of the impassive *contractor* who creates and undergoes price fluctuations, so they generate in him a movement of will that tends to create a social environment in full accord with his changed conscience. The revolutionary significance of the principle consists in denying the basis of bourgeois and mercantile legality the contract: in *placing the rights of the worker above the rights of the capitalist*; in obliging the bourgeois state to recognize that the right of the human being exists outside of bourgeois legality; in generating in the working classes the desire to create an order of things in which the needs and aspirations of the worker are *the only* rule of collective life.

We have already seen how Marx and later Engels recognized little practical effectiveness to the laws on factories, which manage to be respected only by exception. What is essential in them is the principle contrary to the freedom of contracts, which they recognize. But this obviously cannot be enough for the working classes and hence their attempt to overthrow the current form of society. In this sense, even if the denounced movement of concentration of capitalist property, which Marx seems to recognize, were not admissible, the tendential psychological law of social legislation would remain true. It would bring a subjective revolutionary virtue, spurring the implementation of the social fact corresponding to the changed juridical consciousness of the working classes. Hence also the condemnation of the alleged *penetration of class* by Marxism. Just as social legislation produces a new paralyzing of social antagonisms, its progress is accompanied by a triumph of the *spirit of exclusion*, which - when it is not spoiled by socialist politicians, implicitly in favor of the bourgeois classes, and by bourgeois politicians, for the sake of of personal or parliamentary factions, indulgent towards socialism - manifests itself in the working classes as a more acute desire to eliminate the capitalist direction and management of production, and in the bourgeois classes as an increasingly determined will to maintain the common fund and ultimate basis of class domination.

This spirit of exclusion must be considered as a kind of tendential sentiment, contrasted in its development by the existence of different sentiments. It cannot necessarily manifest itself as long as there is, in the capitalist and working class, a common interest in introducing factory legislation, which, regardless of its effectiveness, of intensifying labor productivity and avoiding national disasters due to the organic misery of vast sections of the population, it is a means to activate capitalist competition to the detriment of the smallest companies and to ensure more humane conditions for the worker to carry out his own economic activity. But evidently, once the extreme limit of the convergence of capitalist and workers' interests has been reached on this terrain, a revulsion movement takes place and from that point on, either the capitalist class tries to adapt to a new organization of production, but on condition to direct it and dominate it, or it resolutely resists any further improvement in the lot of the wage worker. In any case, it is certain that, when the foundations of the dominant economic system are not changed, a process of uninterrupted reforms must lead to economic paralysis, the stoppage of production and general misery. Such alleged "reforms" would only act as so many constraints opposed to the normal development of the existing economic system, as so many artificial obstacles to the unfolding of the natural inclinations and laws of that system, that is, as so many means to prevent, together with the malefic influences, even those beneficial. From this point on, either society decays or revolution becomes inevitable. All this will become even clearer when we draw our attention to the effects that other ways of social reform produce.

What has been agreed to call the social reform results from a system of provisions that refer to a fourfold order: a) charity; b) tax; c) insurance; d) the working conditions in the factory, that is, they tend, so to speak, to protect the worker a) in the factory; b) outside the factory. For now, we leave out any consideration of the protective measures proposed in the factory. What effectiveness, with respect to the problem of social

transformation and the elimination of capitalism, to recognize the protective measures, which are adopted outside the factory, considering man no longer as a worker, but as a citizen? Should we recognize in their constant extension a means which gradually leads to higher social forms and yet, in the present case, to the suppression of the wage-earner?

Stand out. As far as charity is concerned, understood in the technical and rigorous sense of the word, no one would think of attributing a revolutionary value to it, so much so that it accords little with the facts. The Italian law on Pious Works of 17 July 1890 aims only at these two purposes: 1) moral and material protection of poor children; 2) hospitalization and maintenance of the acutely or chronically ill, of those unable to work, of abandoned children. Municipalities spend 31 million a year, on average, and Pious Works 35 million. These sums may barely suffice, in a country of 30 million inhabitants, to allay the most acute and painful demands of destitute misery. To imagine that they can be the basis of a social action directed towards an end that is not only and exclusively the satisfaction of the most flagrant and painful miseries, is simply called assuming the absurd and abandoning oneself to social poetry. Even the famous and overly celebrated Elberfeld system lends itself little to considerations of this kind. All that it adds to the ordinary charity towards the destitute of all means is assistance for unemployed workers, when they prove that they have sought and not found work.

Now, private or public charity is basically nothing more than a means of insuring the rich classes against the dangers of desperate poverty. Just remember how the enormous development taken by private charity in France under the direction of Saint Vincent of Padua during the wars of the League and immediately after, originated from the fear of the rich classes in the face of the enormous misery of the working classes, produced by the strange imbalances of the dominant economic system and exacerbated in an improbable way by the internal struggles and external wars, which troubled France from

Richelieu to Mazarino. The insecurity of life not even on the highways, but in the big cities themselves, the growing insolence, as the parasitic court aristocracy said, of the beggars, their accumulation in the inhabited centers and the discipline they were giving themselves, the lack then of a real criminal police and not political or sacramental police, they were enormously concerned by the wealthy classes. They understood the need to abandon a few cents of the plump booty for the benefit of the groaning mass, and thus the system of private charity developed in France. Even more characteristic, as an illustration of this point of view, is the study of the development of charity in the ancient kingdom of Naples. Moreover, a writer of social economy explained with the greatest ease now that the importance of the problem of charity resulted from the need to alleviate the sufferings of so many people, also from the fact, that "these millions of men constitute, for the specialty of their condition, a constant danger to public order." This is called plain speaking!

Neither of the insurance on old age, disability, sickness, etc. whether they are free or compulsory, one could reason otherwise than if they were real charitable expedients, where the fact was not complicated by a more refined hypocrisy. Now, while it is evident that there is no possible society, if it does not take on the burden of the poor old man, that is, deprived of everything, the old-age insurance system makes it possible to reduce the burden that society would otherwise have to bear in order to keeping her; whereas then it is clear that the meager dues paid as old-age pensions barely exceed that level that society in one way or another must pay to keep alive the tired and consumed worker, who still does not decide to leave. In many other cases then - and the observation here does not need to be carried out - compulsory insurance, in addition to being a means of shortening real wages, serves to free the wealthy class from the need to provide directly for the needs of momentary poverty. , produced by job crises. Where then we have before us the farce of accident insurance in Italy, we are forced to ask ourselves if the insurance system is not a subtle discovery of the

bourgeois practical spirit, in order to reduce to a minimum certain expenses inherent in the economic process and inseparable from it.

Nor where the judgment falls on the much vaunted tax transformations, a particular delight of state socialism, does it sound less pessimistic and less skeptical. Wagner would like the tax to act as a corrective to the current distribution of wealth. Leaving here any too subtle dispute about the consequences that derive from a change in the economic equilibrium and about the natural forces that concur to re-establish it, he just needs to recall that a rigorous application of the progressive principle cannot be spoken of except in very narrow limits. And in fact, if the differential share of the tax has not soon absorbed the excess over the minimum of profits and rents, the possibility of its further applications ceases. From this moment on, the competition law - if not even earlier - allows the tax to be incorporated in the sale price, which ends up losing any corrective effect of the distribution of wealth. Given and not granted, as economists know, however, that the tax does not develop before this point energies which tend to eliminate all its practical results, it must be concluded that the correcting and transforming function of the tax is not absolute, but has as a limit higher than a certain height of profit. When the tax attacks the minimum profit, it is necessarily rejected by the economic forces and must therefore renounce all its transforming influence. The judgment therefore that can be made of the so-called social reform is that it in no way possesses revolutionary virtue. As it takes place on the basis of wage earners and capitalist property, it is correlative to this system, it accompanies it in its process, presupposes it and could not deny and subvert it.

The further developments of the principle of social reform, the remaining parts, so to speak, of the reformist program seem aimed at frustrating all hopes of the worker to absorb capitalist profit by the simple play of supply and demand. It seems to all the apostles of social reform, especially if they claim to belong to the socialist schools, that the full development of compulsory

arbitration in labor conflicts contains in itself the seed of admirable solutions. There is talk of a new and mystical "workers' law" which would be forming as opposed to capitalist law, forgetting the *inegalitarian nature of all rights* (Marx), and therefore the implicit admission into a class law, of fighting classes, hence workers' law would not and could not become the formula for the integral emancipation of the workers. But the same principle of arbitration, especially if it is mandatory (and to say that in this form it appears more radical and revolutionary! -) does not imply the admission of a limit to the needs of the working classes, on the basis of respect for the trichotomic partition of the income in capitalist society?

Apart from the repugnance that arouses any novelty, especially in the midst of the rich classes, the capitalists of the most advanced countries immediately saw the advantage that there was in accepting the principle of compulsory arbitration, which tends to suppress and instead brings the condemnation of the dangerous conflicts of strikes. In recent cases, the Geneva bourgeoisie, among the most astute and skilled in the whole world, has rigorously imposed the respect that the Thiébaud law on compulsory arbitration deserved, with which the strike was suppressed, from a right to a crime. Conversely, the lively and resolute opposition that the French workers' unions, among the least tameable in the whole world, made to the Millerand project of November 15, 1900 "sur la grève et arbitrage obligatoires" is well known. In New Zealand, where the law on compulsory arbitration works with the 1901 act, an accident then happened. which has opened the eyes of many workers to the conservative character of these laws, which tend to put the breeches on all the spontaneous movements of the working classes. Mr. Backhouse, commissioned by New South Wales to study the functioning of compulsory arbitration in New Zealand, indicated that in one case the striking newspaper printers had awarded by the arbitration board a lower salary increase than that which already spontaneously the boss had offered his employees privately, and it was justifiable to submit. Mr. Backhouse said that the effects of

the law would be better known "when the arbitrators, instead of increasing wages, will have to reduce them". Of course this point will have to come. Australia is currently in one of those economic phases that the Patten would define dynamic, and in which land, labor and capital tend to give more than proportional incomes for each dose of land, capital or work naturally employed. But when we pass from the dynamic phase to the static phase - that is to say to that phase in which, and for some time now all the countries of Europe have been found - wages will have to undergo a necessary collapse, and obviously the institution of arbitration - which will involve discussions based on comparisons of irrefutable statistical data - will allow the capitalist classes to implement wage reductions with an appearance of an equitable and legal basis, which they would otherwise have lacked. The institution of arbitration, supposing the simultaneous representation of workers and capitalists, presupposes the obligation in the arbitrators to take into account both the interests of capitalists and those of the workers, both the reasons for wages and the limits and heights of profit. Thus the workers, in this wonderful specific, invented or exalted by reformist socialism, will end up finding the most valid instrument of their class oppression.

But even regardless of the legal impediments that the working classes may encounter on their path, and which are otherwise not removable except by the use of force, it is then possible to admit and hold that the emancipation of the working classes, and therefore the elision of every profit or rent of pure capitalist possession, can take place with the pure and simple game of supply and demand, so that the constant progress of wages absorb any remuneration that does not come from work; or does capitalist society develop such energies that such a process of absorption becomes impossible, and where it occurs it results in the stoppage of production? It will be enough to briefly mention the economic solution of the problem, refraining from any detailed examination of special cases.

The case of the increase in wages must be examined from a double point of view, namely: I. as much in the event that it is possible to pass on the increase in wages to the consumer, considering the increase in wages as an increase in costs; and II. so much in the other that such a transfer is impossible. In the event that the increase in wages is compatible with the transfer to the consumer, the event must be considered: a) in which it is only partially transferable; b) in which the total transfer can take place. We will not examine here under which conditions the first hypothesis is fulfilled and under which the second hypothesis. The case under consideration is a species of the broader kind of cost tightening, and yet all the influences which generate and are produced by cost tightening apply to the case under consideration.

A quick look at the problem will show us how it is simpler and more obvious to examine the two most general cases: I. of absolute transferability; II. the absolute non-transferability of the wage increase to the consumer. In fact, if there is partial transferability, tolerated by consumers and tolerated by capitalists, a further increase in wages becomes immediately possible, which becomes, from a certain limit onwards, due to the way the product increases, absolutely non-transferable. And yet the tendential effects of this latest elevation are the only ones that really matter. Nor do we have to worry about a different transferability rate of the increase in wages, so that, for example, in one industry, given certain supply and demand ratios, it is possible to transfer one half of the increase and in another a fourth only. In fact, the law that adjusts competition, working with the withdrawal of the less productive capitals from an industry and with their re-use in the more profitable industry, because it bears a greater degree of transferability of the increase in wages, tends to establish an equal degree of transferability for all industries, affected by a wage increase. We can therefore consider the two extreme cases, outlined above.

In the case of absolute transferability: (I.) the resulting effects can be listed as follows: 1. change in the rate of profit; 2.

respect for the mass of profit; 3. preservation of the real antecedent state of the conditions of the working classes. Indeed, if we disregard the consideration of technical capital, we can conceive an industry in which the total product has the price 100, which breaks down into 50 wages and 50 profit, or which gives a rate of profit of 100%. workers demand a wage increase equal to another 50 and this increase is transferable to the consumer, we will have: product of price 150, wages 100, profit 50; rate of profit 50%. In any case, the mass of profit will remain the same as before. The same increase in the wages of the workers will be quite apparent. And in fact, since there has been a general increase in the price of all things, the workers will discount as consumers the price increase they have enjoyed as producers. The condition of the capitalist classes, however, will be somewhat worsened, because with the same mass of profit they will have to provide consumption that has become more expensive. But the case we are examining may soon be reduced to the other of absolute non-transferability (II.). towards such new increases in wages for which the consequent price increases, not being able to pass on to the consumer, would remain with the capitalist. What consequences could then be drawn from this? One can easily point this out.

The capitalists could manifestly bear only that dent in their various profits which would affect the profits above the minimum necessary for their class existence. Beyond this limit, when they did not find a way to violently strike the working class and with the rigorous arm of the law reduce it to the boundaries of economic necessity created by class trichotomy, they would stop transforming savings into capital. Regardless of any attempt to resist cost increases by intensification of labor and technical improvements, attempts which by this time would have all been exhausted, they would abstain from industrial production. A partial and hidden example of this conduct, an example reduced to Lilliputian proportions, can be found in those tenants of northern Italy, mostly from Veneto and Mantua, who, after having tried to resist the increase in agricultural wages with the means of

productive transformations , temporarily stopped production. The unemployment crisis which they thus provoked destroyed in a moment the ephemeral successes reported by the so-called agrarian socialism of the Italian reformists. Imagine what would happen when - with the intention cleverly nurtured by the working class not to violently attack the legally constituted social structure - the capitalist classes undertake magnificent lockouts on a large scale! Poor reformism of the reformists, what a pitiful end it would have, forced either to preach the revolutionary impetus, or to bow one's head before the bosses! And already the examples of lockouts, which we can remember, all testify to the certainty of success with which the capitalist classes can resort to them.

But even without depicting such extreme hypotheses before the mind, economic science holds a much more conclusive condemnation of all these reformist attempts - real pharmaceutical contrivances of bad Dulcamara which aim to reabsorb capitalist profit, through the efforts of the workers organized on the ground. of the economic dispute. Economic science teaches that only certain certain technical combinations of land, capital and labor give a maximum product; all other combinations give inferior products. It is for this reason that we conclude that small industries and, in some cases, domestic industry are inferior to large industry. Given the private and capitalist ownership of the means of production, only certain combinations yield a maximum product and all others inferior products.

The assumption of those who, in order to increase certain remunerations, wants to change the basis of existing economic relations is logical; the assumption of those who want to increase the same remuneration, without changing the basis of the economic organization, and violating the rule of productive combinations which on the same basis allows - a maximum product is not logical.

Now when - without destroying the private appropriation of the means of production - one wants to assign a fantastic value

to the remuneration of labor, the technical combinations that give a maximum product are altered, and the result is generated *of decreasing total production*. This proposition, obvious to all people skilled in economics, can practically prove itself in a fairly simple way: 100 lire in the hands of a very different thing than 100 lire of the capitalist is one in the hands of the worker. In fact, if you reduce the mass of profits by 100 lire and add them to the mass of wages, you transform 100 lire of productive capital into 100 lire of consumer capital, it being obvious that the workers demand wage increases to satisfy more completely their needs. With the hundred lire they will get themselves 100 lire of new satisfactions. But in the hands of capitalists or workers functioning as capitalists, such as in cooperatives, 100 lire of capital means a future mass of products enlivened by profit, that is, a differential share, for example of 5, 10, 20 %. Thus the transformation of a part of the capital into a higher consumption share, from a certain point on, becomes an incentive to decrease total production. However, from the point of view of the general interest of society, it may be convenient, at this point, to change the legal structure of the property and invest the workers, because in this way they will be subject to the economic needs of saving and capitalization, which before it was the turn of the capitalists; but not to continue to increase wages, leaving the legal structure of the company unchanged. Reformism then becomes anti-economic, and revolutionism the very imperative of economic necessity.

The systematic intervention of society to the advantage of only one of the production coefficients, leaving unchanged the way of producing and the formula of distribution, thus ends in a disaster for the whole of society. The *state interventionism* of the reformists, so different from the *anti-state socialism* of the working class, may well act as a social dissolver, but it seems, devoid of reconstructive virtue. If it were legitimate to resort to somewhat forced comparisons between very different historical periods, the effects of state interventionism would have to be judged in the same way as the consequences of Christian

agitation, at the dawn of its incapability of replacing the traditional organization of society and therefore of ensuring the continuity of the historical process, but well capable of disintegrating pagan society from top to bottom and dissolving it. All his action was purely negative. His very asserted renunciation of a true earthly upheaval served to increase the acuteness of the evil. Society perished, disintegrating like an organism struck by a nasty contagion, which does not attack the vital centers, but slowly corrodes the external tissues, ultimately reaching the hidden centers. The influences of a complex and varied system of social reforms would be no different. It is probable that they would succeed in producing social paralysis; it is difficult that they would be able to give life to a new organism. The *reformist utopia* is a pathological historical movement; the *revolutionary reality*, on the other hand, is a physiological crisis.

We see, in fact, the social reform movement flourish only when it responds to a common interest of the various classes of a given society. On the other hand, we see the laws on factories remain a dead letter and printed characters when the working classes either do not need them or are unable to make use of them. Now while this means that the luxury of written social legislation can be a parliamentary game; on the other hand it becomes a social benefit, when the interest of all classes of society contributes to their respect. But outside of this moment, what function do social laws perform? Either they are verbal pasture offered by politicians speaking mentalists and not only socialists, but also, indeed above all bourgeois, to the restlessness of the workers' movement, or unconscious instruments of social paralysis. It seems that historical fatality, a goddess as imaginary as ever, and which serves only to mystically qualify the logic of a social system, the not always derivable intertwining of its natural laws, poses very rigorous alternatives to human activity. It specifies to what extent it is permissible for a society to enter the path of reforms, and to what extent the need for a revolution intervenes, that is, to radically replace interests and prevailing classes with different interests, classes and institutions. But that

does not mean that men cannot come to terms with themselves. Schmoller says that "there is no revolution which cannot be avoided". Men can certainly adopt provisions that undermine the need for radical solutions. Finally, the agents of our destiny are ourselves, and if we set out on a path where endless waiting and adaptation to the least worst replaces the need for great solutions and the desire for the best, revolution can well be avoided. .. but on condition of perhaps greater disasters. Even now the bourgeoisie and the German proletariat feel what it means for a country not to have a revolution behind it that will radically do away with the past. In a certain sense, Germany is our Italy, which has often mistaken for political and social revolutions the sporadic movements, here and there artificial, certainly of a very special nature, which proposed the national unity of the country . But, if you look carefully, just as Italy emerged from the autonomous movement of history, since the sixteenth century, it has not had political and social revolutions since that time, which have a certain historical value. The national movement itself was more the product of foreign influences, French and English, than of the capacity and material strength of the Italians. The lack of a critical literature on our "Risorgimento" (- ouch, how different from the ancient, marvelous and magnificent "Renaissance"! -) is indirect proof of the largely passive role of Italians in the reconstitution of unity national.

A social reform that results in a stoppage of production or at least in a decrease in production itself, is as much antisocialist as ever. We are interested in the maximum development of economic forces, since social well-being can only be conditioned by the maximum development of wealth. Now just as the customs protection measures result in a destruction of wealth, so it can happen for some workers' protection laws. The Christian-social paternalism and the socialist philanthropism of certain socialists can prejudice the interests of production with the interests of capitalism. In Marx's motto, which I quoted at the head of this chapter, and in which is the whole socialist philosophy of social legislation, it is explained that "in their own

interest" the capitalist classes must remove all the legally controllable obstacles which oppose the full development of the working class. Now this means that we, with social legislation, and under the pretext of philanthropy, must not create new obstacles to such a development. And this would inevitably happen if the protectionist mania pushed us to subject the working class to a whole series of controls, inspections, coercions, which, while they would result in prejudice for the economy of the country, would extinguish every virtue of the working class. autonomy and initiative. Of course all this is too obvious for reformist stupidity to understand it.

CHAPTER SIX

Violence in Marx's System

Marx's system gave rise to two legends. The first is that the evolution of human societies takes place in a mechanical and automatic way, in an almost fatal way and in a mathematically ascertainable direction. Marxism would therefore resemble one of the many idealistic systems which have claimed to give us the concrete and definitive formula of social evolution. This kind of kinship between Marxism and idealistic systems appears so spontaneously to the minds of the more orthodox Marxists that Plekhanov finds Saint-Simon greatly admired for having said that "the future can be deduced from the well-observed past." Saint-Simon is a perfect idealist. Moreover, Hegel, who is the typical thinker of idealism, had imagined a series of schemes representing the perennial historical process of art, religion and law.

The second legend can be considered as the practical corollary of the first. As the world evolves by itself, it is useless to intervene consciously and by design in the process of its evolution. The kitchen of the future is like a vending machine: put a cheap piece in a hole, the device generously dispenses a social renewal.

But this conclusion also has serious drawbacks. Since the socialist movement fell at the mercy of the politicians, it was necessary to convince the masses that they should not dispense with the work of these gentlemen. Politicians are born with two fixations: parliament and the hatred of violence. The hatred of violence of the crowds, however, is the most spontaneous manifestation of their feelings. As the socialist movement, more or less coherently, and barring all local fluctuations, claimed Marxist paternity, it was hard work to prove that Marxism, understood as the pedagogic of the workers' movement, condemned the use of violence without further ado. The

illustrative references on this point are useless. The minute journalistic literature of socialism, mostly Italian, offers abundant material of documentation to anyone who goes in search of it.

In the *Misère de la Philosophie* there is a passage that politicians have often invoked to defend the legend so advantageous for them: - "For the oppressed class to be emancipated, it is necessary that the productive powers already acquired and the existing social relations can no longer coexist side by side The organization of the revolutionary elements as a class supposes the existence of all the productive forces that could develop within the old society ". Essential, say the politicians, is that the relations of production change. When these have changed shape, social revolutions come by themselves. Applying violence first to social relationships is vain, sterile and can be criminal. Violence cannot change the face of society. We will see shortly if it is true that in Marx's system violence is incapable of changing social relations or if, rather, in this same system, violence is not considered. as an economic fact, or, sometimes, as the starting point of an economic relationship. At this point we need an observation from Sorel.

"The reductions of sociology and the dialectical schemes that summarize them, he says, are meant to be used in particular matters; we consider them as subjective because they depend on the direction we give to our thinking. they have a true scientific character, we must always define the purpose in view of which we enunciate them; it is the philosophy of action that must illuminate the path of sociology ". Sorel observes very well that this view is strictly Marxist. It could not be denied. In the eleventh marginal gloss on Feuerbach's philosophy, Marx, since April 1845, observed (and he has always remained faithful to this philosophy of action): "philosophers have limited themselves to various interpretations of the world; what really matters is to change it. " Marx was not only a theorist but also a man of practical politics. By a process of natural interpenetration in his spirit of the two, he often deduced his practical politics from his scientific observations, but sometimes he also derived his

theoretical views from the practical action he developed. No wonder. Anyone who takes the point of view that the essential thing is to reassess the world of society, inasmuch as he precisely supposes that man is the factor of his own history and therefore the agent of this, must necessarily be led to derive from practical politics and from experimental action the elements of pure doctrine.

Marx's biography often serves to illustrate Marx's doctrines. In the period from 1845 to 1852 Marx is convinced that we are on the eve of a European revolution that will give the proletariat the upper hand. There is no doubt that it was in a period of social crisis. The prediction was just wrong about the class that would triumph after the revolution. Marx was then active in radical-communist journalism and secret associations. Of course, he did not want the revolutionary forces to be wasted in untimely retching. His opinion was that it was better to wait for the hour of the objective crisis, avoiding the dangerous anticipations of the adventurous and warlike spirit. In this sense Sorel interprets the aforementioned passage from the *Misère de la Philosophie* not as a law in the scientific sense of the word, but as an advice that warned revolutionaries against the illusions of the revolution conceived in the ancient way.

Now, for anyone who intends to understand and evaluate the theory of violence in the Marxist system, four problems will subsequently arise before his spirit. According to this system: 1) can violence modify social relations? 2) at what times and under what conditions can it? 3) how is it to be understood? 4) when can its use be recommended?

I believe that these problems must be resolved with Marx himself and trying to keep away as much as possible from the vulgar gloss of Marxism and that of Engels. I am convinced that Engels has more than once betrayed the spirit of Marxism or at least adapted it to certain small contingencies of everyday politics, especially German. This, moreover, was a right which for Engels came from being not only a vulgarizer, but also a collaborator of doctrine. However, I do not consider it right to

give the specific Engelsian theory the value of a true Marxist doctrine. Trying to resolve the four questions I have mentioned, we give due value to the two legends, the one I would call historical-critical, about the initiation and the operating forces of social evolution, and the tactical-political one, about the forces to be used to act decisively in collective life. In solving the two points cumulatively, we act according to the spirit of Marxism, which being a theory of action does not allow to separate the mere scientific research on the rhythm of social becoming from the advice on the forces to be used to support or modify the existing structure of society.

Even the simple and literary reference to certain Marxist manifestations condemns the strange claim that makes Marxism a doctrine that repudiates violence. In the *Deutsch-Französischen Jahrbüchern* (1844) Marx preaches the proletarian-philosophical revolution. In his annotations to Feuerbach, he claims "subversive practice" ("umwaelzende Praxis") in place of theory.

In his writing against Proudhon (1847), Marx shows that a society founded on class conflicts must necessarily lead to brutal contrasts, to the conflict of man against man. The writing ends with the words of Georges Sand: "war or death, blood struggle or nothingness: this is how the question is inexorably posed". In the *Manifesto of the Communists* (1848) it is said that the Communists "openly declare that their aims cannot be achieved except with the violent ruin of the whole existing social order". In the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* (November 7, 1848) Marx wrote: "there is only one means of shortening the agony of the old society and hastening the birth of the new; only one means: the revolutionary terror". In the year 1850, after noting the failure of the European revolution of 1848, he exclaimed: "the revolution is dead; long live the revolution" (*Die Klassenkaemfe in Frankreich*, 1895 edition, p. 41, 99). In 1851 and 1852, writing in the New York Tribune, Marx declared that a revival of the revolution with a communist and proletarian character was imminent. The same expectation of the revolution emerges from his writings on the

Crimean War. In defense of the Commune, Marx accepted that revolutionary movement as a whole, including the shooting of hostages. He then he made the apology at the Hague congress (1872). In the circulars of the Communist League of 1850, Marx wants to make the revolution permanent and advises the "so-called" excesses against people or buildings particularly affected by popular hatred.

In that seventh paragraph of the twenty-fourth chapter of the first Capital, in which Marx examines the historical trend of capitalist accumulation, there is enough to define the relationship that exists according to Marx between violence and social revolution. Marx first describes the process of the socialization of work (*Vergesellschaftung der Arbeit*) and the transformation of the land and other means of production into socially exploited means of production, that is, communistically. This process is conceived by Marx as a true automatic process, that is, as a process that is carried out by the immanent laws of capitalist production. On its initiation, the will of men is conceived as subject to a law that forces it to act in accordance with the process described, that is, in the sense of strengthening its effectiveness and scope. The immanent laws of a social constitution correspond to the logic of that constitution. Therefore men cannot move within a given social constitution except by respecting or undergoing its principles.

Every social constitution guarantees advantages to the men who live within it. The exploitation of these advantages is equivalent to the theoretical respect for the laws of this social constitution, but at the same time it develops consequences that create in another group of men the desire to subvert the existing form of the social constitution. Now at this point it is very necessary to keep two things apart: the objective consequences of the functioning of certain social laws; the desire to remove those consequences and the social constitution that generates them. Two different errors arise from confusing the first point with the second, and the second with the first. When one runs into the first confusion, one is led to deny the efficacy of the

human will and therefore of conscious violence on social evolution; when one falls into the second, the conditionality of the historical process is denied and arbitrary and personal action is justified.

I will recall in passing that the immanent laws of capitalist accumulation are reduced, according to Marx, under two heads:

a) an economic process: competition, which reduces the number of capital tycoons (*Je ein Kapitalist schlaegt viele todt*);

b) a technical process, which implements the socialization of work, in three ways: 1) making it more aware through the use of science applied to industries; 2) developing the extension of the field of use and the number of arms applied to industry; 3) coordinating the various productive functions, so that each is conditioned by the other.

I will not examine here whether the laws of capitalist accumulation found by Marx are or are not today superseded by objective experience. What it is useful to point out for the needs of our investigation is that Marx conceived an automatic process, a kind of social logic, which takes place independently of the innovative and subversive will of men. This last kind of action arises later.

It is also known to what consequences of the functioning of the natural laws of capitalist economy Marx attributes the virtue of provoking a mood of revolt against the existing social form. Marx believes that the development of capitalist accumulation generates an accumulation of misery, "oppression, servitude, degeneration and exploitation" of the working mass. This can be said to be the second moment in the social evolution of the capitalist system. At first no such consequences appear. That is the golden age of capitalism, at least with respect to the working classes. But this second moment is not marked by a mutation of the existing order of things, and results in the formation of a special mood in the midst of the working class. Experience shows us that we can stop there, without giving rise to a third moment. The revolt of the working classes does not inevitably

follow. But capitalist society did not limit itself to producing the misery of the masses. It has done something more; it has "educated, gathered, organized" the working class, that is, it has laid the material premises of the moral revolt of the working class. As long as the capitalist system only produces the misery of the masses, it does not necessarily follow the revolt against it. The *Lumpenproletariat*, that is the scoundrel mass of the big cities (vagabonds, idlers, prostitutes and criminals) does not revolt. The working class revolt when there are two conditions: a) that it is educated and organized; b) that it is reduced to the extreme of misery. We do not have to concern ourselves now whether the conditions set by Marx as indispensable for obtaining the revolt of the masses have this character or not.

Here comes the third moment of the evolution of the system. "The hour of capitalist property strikes. The expropriators are expropriated." The functioning of the capitalist regime creates in the masses a de facto condition by which a mood of hostility towards the existing economic order is formed in them; this state of mind is the psychological premise of a practical action aimed at changing the social order on the part of the working masses. - So far we are always safe. The expropriators have not yet been expropriated. States of mind are the premises of action, not action itself. Will the revolution take place or will it not? Here is one thing that cannot be decided except in retrospect. The revolution will take place ... if it is done; and if not, it won't. Monsieur de la Palisse would not reason otherwise. Revolution does not lie in the material conditions that justify it. The social status of the miserable plebs of the big cities shows that man adapts to everything. In classical civilizations we have numerous examples of the extreme object to which a population can be reduced without thinking of revolt.

For our time, let us remember the Christian populations subjected to the Turk and the Polish and Finnish populations subjected to Russia. Hate, as such, generates nothing. - *The revolution lies in the expropriation of the capitalist class of all its means of production, by and for the benefit of the working class.*

This is the voluntary and violent moment of social evolution. Voluntary is because it may not even happen. Experience shows us that there are also social dissolutions and involutions, that is, phases of arrest and reversal of the evolutionary process. Revolution is the parenthesis of social automatism. Violent because it presupposes an arbitrary and design change of the existing structure. In other words, the parts of the building, left to themselves, would stand differently from what they do not stand after one has put his hand to it.

Is expropriation possible without violence? Logic and instinct say no. It is the same answer that Marxism gives. In fact, in the same chapter in which Marx hypothesizes the succession of future social violence, he describes those of the past. Communism will result from the expropriation of the capitalists; but capitalism emerged from the expropriation of private producers (*die Expropriation der un mittelbaren Produzenten*); therefore the historical process of this form of expropriation which lies behind us will also throw sufficient light on the process of future capitalist expropriation. But what does the expropriation of the direct producer consist of? In a series of violent methods (*Sie umfasst eine Reihe gewaltsamer Methoden*). "The expropriation of the immediate producer is carried out through the use of the most ruthless vandalism and under the stimulus of the most infamous, filthiest and most mildly hateful passions." - The expropriation of the past was the expropriation of a few individuals to the detriment of the mass; the expropriation of the future will be the expropriation of a few individuals for the benefit of the mass. Thus the former seems ethically blameworthy and the latter laudable. But nothing invites us to believe that the formal process of expropriation that lies ahead of us will be different from the one we have behind us. In other words, to say nothing, it suggests that, if the expropriations of the past were accomplished with violence, those of the future will not be accomplished with violence.

Anyone who considers the importance that the revolution assumes in Marx's system (so much so that it is perfectly

legitimate to call Marx the theorist of social revolutions) cannot refuse to admit that the study of this part of the system throws a very bright light on the whole system. Historical materialism presents precisely as one of its major theoretical difficulties the combination of individual and collective voluntary effort with the immanent laws of a social system. These laws considered theoretically as the logic of the system and practically as the complex of influences that the system exerts on the generality of men of a given social era and, more especially, on a group of them, are then violable by men and by them to editable design? We see that at some point, yes. When the system has entered a critical period, that is, when it has produced a class which, due to its special conditions of life, may have some interest in modifying the existing social structure, the intellectual world of this social class acts in a certain way as a propeller of the evolution, from its determinant. The design, the will, the human arbitrariness reappear their demands. Even the individual can give a decisive movement to social evolution. When one system is about to fall apart and another is about to arise, the human will acquires a power over the future destinies of society which in the normal course of events does not belong to it.

By examining the genesis of capitalist accumulation, Marx defines the function of violence in social evolution. Far from the capitalist system being constituted by the autogenetic development of social forms and by a process of slow substitution of social forms and relationships, it results partly through the casual inference of various circumstances and partly as a product of action to drawing, that is, from a series of conscious and direct modifications of the old social structure. We do not pass from the feudal system to the capitalist system, without, as Marx thinks, the use of violence has not altered the old social structure. England. They are :

1. the dissolution of the princely entourages and the transformation of arable land into pastures, which create an offer of idle arms on the market;

2. the theft of ecclesiastical assets, which produces the proletarianization of the enormous masses of people who live within the cloisters and on ecclesiastical assets, as well as the enrichment of the few favorites of the Crown and of those who speculate on the purchase of ecclesiastical assets;

3. the abolition of the feudal constitution of the land (restoration of the Stuarts) with relative theft of the private properties of independent peasants;

4. the destruction of municipal property, by means of the *bills for inclosures of Communs*;

5. the expulsion of peasants from the land (clearing of estates);

6. the artificial lowering of the level of wages, thanks to the famous *Statutes of Laborers* subsequently published;

Thanks to the use of this complex of means, the conditions for the existence of the wage system are created. In fact, this system not only supposes the existence of the capital accumulated in some hands (and which also partly accumulates due to the use of political devices, as seen in the case of the colonial and protective system, as well as with the creation of public debt); but above all of a mass of people deprived of everything and living on the sale of their own labor force. Now, to achieve this result, old social relations must be boldly modified. This can only be done by resorting to legal artifice or material violence; but violence also exists when a class in power uses the legal machine to achieve some specific ends. Violence is immediate and non-consensual modification of a state of affairs; that this result occurs both with the work of private individuals and with that of the public authorities, the nature of the relationship does not change at all.

Indeed, in this way a good indication is given to the working classes. As these, not unlike the bourgeois class with respect to feudalism, intend to modify the existing social relations, that is to say expropriate the capitalist class of its means of production, in two ways they can resort to violence: 1. directly modifying the relations that exist between them and the

capitalists, for example with strikes, with the taking over of factories, with the private recognition of their co-ownership of the factory; 2. by modifying them through the action of the State, or directly manipulated by them, or forced to undergo their influence. In both cases their line of conduct reproduces the contours of that followed once more by the bourgeois class in the face of the feudal and proprietary class and probably of every class that tends to dominate production and, therefore, society.

If we now want to try to perceive the relationship that according to Marx intercedes between the economic moment and violence, we can very easily reach our goal. An explicit step of the Capital helps this result. Here it is: "in the process of capitalist production a working class develops which, by education, tradition, habit, recognizes the requirements of that mode of production as evident natural laws. The organization of the consolidated capitalist system breaks all resistance; continued production of a relative overpopulation keeps the law of supply and demand and therefore of wages in a track corresponding to the needs of enrichment of capital; the deaf constriction of economic relations seals the domination of the capitalist over the worker. not economic violence, but only by exception. For the usual start of things it is enough to abandon the worker to the natural laws of production. *Otherwise things go to the beginnings of capitalist production*". On the beginnings of the capitalist system (and this can be said of the beginnings of every social system) violence reigns supreme. Social relations are artificially created. The man is caught, so to speak, by the throat and forced to accept the law that is said to him. In this case the law is still human, precisely because by directly depending on the will of man it reflects his naive cruelty; the natural law arises later, that is, when "tradition, education and habit" lead to the acceptance of the product of human artifice as something natural. - *The economic moment is an act of violence that has become a necessity*. It starts with violence and ends with the economy. Is this interpretation of Marxism, if anything, arbitrary? We see.

In the eighth chapter of the first book of *Capital* Marx deals with the limits of the working day. He expounds the dispute that is taking place dramatically between the capitalist and the worker. The first tries to extend the working day as long as possible, the second to shorten it. Both refer to the same principles.

The capitalist, when he tries to extend the working day as far as possible and one day extract two of them, affirms his right as a buyer. On the other hand, the specific nature of the goods sold implies on the part of the buyer a limit to its consumption, and the worker, *when he wants to reduce the working day to a normal size, affirms his right as a seller*. Here there is an antinomy: right against right, both guaranteed by the law of mercantile exchange. Violence decides among equal rights (*Zwischen gleichen Rechten entscheidet die Gewalt*).

This step of *Capital* is very important in determining the function of violence in the Marxist system. We have a starting position: a specific working day. There is an antithetical movement directed on the one hand to prolong, and on the other, to reduce the existing limit of the working day. A fight breaks out. Result: reduction of the working day. What is the result of? To the preponderant force. Hence a new economic position, which due to custom is respected as law. The economic law is therefore - like the political law the result of a victorious compulsion. *Conditional violence generates the initial positions of the economy*. This is Marxism.

But let's linger a moment longer. Marxism largely lacked the objective commentary on clarification and interpretation. The revolutionary character of his doctrines frightened scholars. And since these in general do not abound in courage, it seemed more useful and advantageous to denigrate and "refute" Marxism, rather than to understand and declare it.

The Marxist gloss was either an apologetic or a demolition. We, on the other hand, must attempt an interpretation that is the most relatively objective. This is all the more necessary, since the not strictly economic part of Marx, and which even in the

opinion of Pareto is the most important in Marx's system, did not have the honor of in-depth discussions.

Regarding the normal working day, Marx observes: "the determination of the normal working day is therefore the product of a long civil war, more or less disguised, fought between the capitalist class and the working class".

Previously he had wondered what is a working day? And he had to answer: it is impossible to determine. For the capitalist, the working day is the twenty-four hours of the physical day, minus the time strictly necessary to rest and repair the organic forces of the living machine. The capitalist does not understand at all that the worker may need some time to develop his crop and fulfill certain social obligations. It is led not only to overcome every limit of moral concern, but the same physical limits assigned to the refreshment of the depleted workers' forces. The dawn of the capitalist regime was marked by the craziest waste of the life and health of the workers.

The struggle for the determination of the working day takes place in two opposite directions. "Compare, for example, today's English factory legislation with the Labor Statutes from the fourteenth to the mid-eighteenth century. While the modern legislation of factories violently shortens the working day, those statutes tried to violently prolong it". "Science" is of the opinion that the whole physical day should be devoted to work, that is, to the service of capital. Marx quotes the author of the "Essay on Trade and Commerce" who is of the opinion that if by God's command it is not necessary to work on Sundays, this is because God himself has established that the poor work, without any interruption other than a short rest for sleep, on all other days. - But after capital "has celebrated its orgies" and has destroyed the "idea of night and day" the working class begins to stir. It demands factory regulations, that a brake be imposed on the carefree arbitrariness of capital, that measures be taken to safeguard the life and health of the working class. - The four-year period 1847-50 is decisive in the history of English social legislation. Workers are not overly satisfied with the abolition of

protective duties on wheat and other basic consumable raw materials. The Chartist movement continues its agitation to obtain universal suffrage and the ten-hour normal day and this triumphs despite the opposition of the Cobdens, the Brights and the other leaders of the liberal movement. - It should be noted that "Science", which later had to boast as its own triumph the "principle" of limiting working hours, was fiercely opposed to the end of the adoption of every limiting law. Regarding the case of Mr. Newmark, collaborator and editor of the *History of Prices* of Tooke, first adversary and then advocate of the limitation in question, Marx with the usual brutality of speech wonders: "it is perhaps scientific progress to make cowardly concessions to opinion public? ". But it seems that this is the case. Of course, since Marx's death the system has been perfected.

What does the struggle to limit working hours mean? - Mind you. As long as the working day has any length, science and experience unanimously proclaim that it is a "natural law" to respect that duration. The capitalists declare: how to get below that level? Competition obliges us to respect it. Our heart may suffer, but we have nothing to do with it. - Fortunately, workers have the good sense not to respect too similar prohibitions of science and practice. They want, they claim, they impose a certain length of the working day. They create a new condition of equilibrium, which science hastens to proclaim a "natural law". - And what is this new demand of the workers? Maybe a whim or an will? Sorel rightly notes that it is a question instead of a true juridical claim, founded on reasons of law, drawn from the same source of what constitutes the law of the bourgeoisie. "To defend themselves against the serpent of their tortures, the workers must make a single front (ihre Koepfe zusammenrotten) and wrest as a class a law of the state, a powerful social obstacle, which prevents themselves, in the free contract stipulated with capital, from selling themselves and their offspring to death and slavery. "

This step is very important. We have seen that workers, using collective violence, manage to change the economic law. Violence, as Marx himself says, is an economic factor. But can

this violence be used on whim? We see that not. To achieve such a relatively modest thing, like the limitation of working hours, the workers: a) must form a single body, that is, they must rise up to the feeling of the commonality of their class interests; b) they must be aware of an offense against their personality, that is, the right to physical integrity that all men possess; c) they must refer to a precise and uncontested legal formula: compliance with the contract for the sale of a commodity which, having special qualities, requires special precautions to be taken in its regard. This commodity is precisely the workforce. Only when they have reached the height of this moral development can they successfully impose their will and produce a break from the dominant economy.

This reasoning applies verbatim to the great social transformation that will replace the associated and cooperative method of production for the private and capitalist one. In this regard, it will be useful to recall that Marx often said that the working classes will have to go through a long period of revolutionary terror before they come to power. We already know that at the beginning of every new social formation Marx places violence, which must shorten the agony of the old society and the cries of the new. But Marx himself warns that the example of the Paris Commune proves that it is not enough for the workers to gain power for the new society to arise. They also need to be capable of exercising power and directing production. How the exercise of that violence that was supposed to lead to the limitation of the working day is not the work of chance, but occurs under certain objective and subjective conditions; thus the exercise of that greater violence, of an infinitely wider scope, which will transform the old social order, presupposes that the proletariat has already developed a more refined and chosen ideology than that corresponding to the society that is about to overthrow itself. Violence transforms, but it cannot be used on a whim.

The interpretation that we give of the theory of revolution according to Marx finds its full confirmation in the speech that

Marx gave before the jurors of Cologne on February 9, 1849, defending himself from the accusation of excitement to rebellion and civil war. I have said several times in the course of this writing that Marx's biography often illuminates and clarifies his doctrines. Marx is accused of having signed a manifesto that excites the people to take up arms against the state. Marx categorically admits this. Engels observes: "Marx's apologia defends the revolutionary point of view against the hypocritical legality of government, and can still serve as a model for more than one of our contemporaries. Have we invited the people to take up arms against the government? Without a doubt: it was our duty". Except that immediately afterwards Engels adds (these words of Engels are placed as a preface to Marx's defensive discourse): "Have we violated the law and abandoned the legal ground? Very good; but the laws that we have violated, the government has already violated and thrown under the feet of the multitude. The legal land no longer exists". It would therefore seem that Engels interpreted Marx's theory of popular violence in this way: that the use of violence itself is permissible only when the government was the first to violate the existing legality. In the preface to Marx's defense before the Cologne jurors, the germ of the thought that Engels later developed in Marx's preface to class struggles in France should be found. We think that Engels' interpretation does not respond to the text of the discourse and to the continuously revolutionary thought of Marx.

The point of view of this discourse is the same that Marx later develops in *Capital*, regarding the struggle for the reduction of working hours. This coincidence is of the highest importance and serves to prove the admirable coherence of the thought of Marx, who, after all, before the Cologne jurors was defending not a purely academic and doctrinal thesis, but his personal freedom. This is the position. Marx signed an appeal for revolt because the Crown moved the seat of the National Assembly and thus began the counter-revolution. As later in *Capital* (we have cited the passage above) he will ask himself who should decide between the right of the capitalist and that of the worker: in his defensive

speech he poses the question: "who was in possession of his full right, the Crown or the National Assembly?" He replies: "Here is a question of history. All countries, all the courts of Prussia taken together cannot decide. Only one power can solve the problem: history".

In *Capital* he opines that between two rights he judges strength. The position of the speech is the same. "The press, he continues, both revolutionary and reactionary, declared that it was a conflict between two forces, and *between two forces only force can decide*. A government body proclaimed it very well shortly before the end of the conflict. The *Neue Preussische Zeitung*, an organ of the current ministry, recognized it perfectly. A few days before the crisis he said: now it is no longer a question of rights; it is a question of strength and it will be seen that the ancient monarchy still possesses strength by the grace of God. The *Neue Preussische Zeitung* understood the position perfectly well. Force against force. Victory will be for one of them".

And later, in the same speech, he confirms this realistic theory to the point of brutality: "Leave the revolution aside and stick to the official theory of compromise. According to this same theory, two. sovereign powers faced each other. Two sovereign powers cannot function simultaneously side by side, in the same State. It's a similar nonsense to squaring the circle. Material violence decides between two sovereignties". Marx always remains faithful to this theory. History is not a judicial dispute, in which it is a question of establishing which side is the law. "Society does not rest on the law ... Napoleon's Code did not create bourgeois society". The right is the safeguarding of special interests. "Being on the legal ground means defending special interests". So we might as well say things as they are. Interest versus interest. Which are the prevalent ones? Which are the strongest? But there is no waning interest that does not possess a semblance of strength. Struggle is therefore a necessity and with it the material revolution. This breaks out irrepressibly as long as there is conflict between the existing legality and the new social

forces. Then it is a question of overthrowing and overturning the existing legality. Violence ultimately decides.

In his speech before the Cologne jurors, Marx clearly explains what the political and juridical presuppositions of the old society were and why it could only disappear with violence. The political expression of the ancient society was the kingship of divine right, the protection of the bureaucracy, the independence of the army. The social basis that corresponded to this ancient political power was privileged aristocratic ownership with slave or quasi-slave peasants, small patriarchal or corporatized industry, the brutal opposition of the city and the countryside, and above all the supremacy of the countryside over the city. - The presuppositions of the new bourgeois society are different. Bourgeois society cannot tolerate agriculture being hindered by legal privileges; it cannot admit that bureaucracy dominates industry; it cannot recognize that the politics of dynastic interests is the rule of international exchanges and alliances. Finance must not overlap with the economy. In the old feudal state the taxman has the needs of the Crown as the only limit of his needs. In the new bourgeois society, the taxman must respect the needs of industry. It is egalitarian and leveling. He knows no states, no differences between city and countryside. She is a resolute enemy of the bureaucracy and the monarchy by divine right.

Is there any possibility of a compromise between the old feudal society and the new bourgeois society? In other words, there is the possibility of a *peaceful* solution to the conflict between them. Marx shows that no. "The monarchy by divine right, superior political expression, superior political representative of the ancient feudal and bureaucratic society, cannot therefore make *sincere concessions* to modern bourgeois society. The simple instinct of conservation, the society that supports it, on which it relies, will continually push it to withdraw the concessions made, to risk the counter-revolution". - The revolutionary solution is therefore in *re ipsa*. It follows from the nature of the conflict and the contending parties. The problems

of social conflicts are problems of strength. Only violence can solve them. "No respite, therefore, between the two companies. Their material interests, their needs require a fight to the death: one must triumph, the other succumb. This is the only agreement that can be established between them". The Marxist theory of violence is therefore not what Engels indicated, that is, that it could always be used, but only when the government had trampled on legality, but when instead an existing social force finds an obstacle to its expansion into another contrasting force.

We have already seen (and moreover the history of the struggle fought by Marx against the Communists like Manfredo Willich and the collectivists like Mikhail Bakunin demonstrates this) how Marx does not justify any use of material force. He is far from authorizing personal insurrections and heroic calls for street struggle.

On the other hand, it must be honestly recognized that Marxism offers few elements to solve the problem when the use of violence can be considered legitimate and justified. The very criterion of the moral and intellectual development of the class or political group that rebels is inconclusive. Ultimately we remain at the *sicut erat*. Who then is the judge of this position? - I do not think I am mistaken in saying that it must have been precisely the doubts that appeared in Engels' mind in this regard that led him to his well-known statements regarding the condemnation of the street struggles.

The study of Marx's minor writings, especially those on the counter-revolution in Germany and the coup d'état of 2 December, show Marx's little regard for parliamentary retreats and the contempt with which he surrounded professional parliamentarians. He declared they were suffering from that special disease which is *parliamentary cretinism*. "This incurable disease, he says, makes its unhappy victims penetrate the solemn conviction that the whole world, its history and its future, are governed, determined by the majority of the votes of the particular representative body, which has the honor of count them among its members; that everything that happens outside

the walls of their assembly wars, revolutions, construction of railways, colonization of new continents, discovery of gold deposits in California, the canals of Central America, the Russian armies and everything that can claim to influence on the destinies of the human race - is nothing compared to the immense events which depend on the question which at that moment occupies the attention of their honorable assembly". - In any case, he assigned parliaments a subordinate function. In defending him before the Cologne jurors, which is decisive for the history of the tactical principles of Marxism, Marx says: "Parliament has no rights for itself; the nation has simply confided to him the vindication of its own rights. If it does not fulfill its mandate it becomes lapsed. The whole nation then enters the stage and acts in the fullness of its power. For example, if a national assembly were to sell itself to a treacherous government, the nation would have to drive both of them: government and assembly. If the Crown makes a counter-revolution, the nation rightly responds with the revolution. The people, in this case, do not know what to do with the authorization of a national assembly".

Therefore I do not consider the well-known Engelsian theory of revolutions to be fully in conformity with the Marxist spirit. Even more can be said. I believe that Engels himself would not write today, 8 years after having written it, the well-known preface to the class struggles in France in 1848-50 by Karl Marx. That preface was composed under the inspiration of an exclusively German state of affairs and under rapidly changing conditions. Between 1890 and 1894, the German ruling classes, impressed by the rapid electoral progress of the socialists, showed fear of such progress disastrous consequences for their class domination. The deputy Fechenbach-Laudenbach wrote the pamphlet: "Should we force socialist democracy to acute revolution, to street struggle?" (*Soll man die Sozialdemokratie zur akuten Revolution, zu Strassenkämpfen zwingen?*). The author recalls that this thesis was posed by the Hamburger Nachrichten in an article attributed to Bismark himself. Engels

refers to this opinion of the German ruling class when he notes: "And so it came about that the bourgeoisie and the government came to fear much more than the legal action, than the illegal action of the workers' party, much more than the successes of the elections, than of the rebellion ". And Engels, who is not only a theorist, but a party leader, dictates the well-known preface to Marx's writing to warn the ruling classes that the workers' party will not take the bait.

But things have changed rapidly since that time. The ruling classes have easily succeeded in convincing themselves that the effectiveness of the parliamentary advances of the working classes is very limited. The recent experiences of general strikes in various countries, the victorious resistance of repeated attempts at parliamentary obstruction, the ease with which the ruling classes realized they could change the law in cases where it was too favorable to the workers, the generalized awareness that a faithful battalion of grenadiers can make it possible to frustrate with impunity all the victories of universal suffrage and modify the universal suffrage itself 1) by now make the ruling classes consider the electoral progress of the socialists as infinitely less dangerous than what could not previously appear. - On the other hand, Engels' observations against the insurrectional movements appear increasingly supported by the consideration that if the means of offense available to the public power against the rebels have progressed (means of concentration and supply of the troops, favorable topographical conditions of the cities, weapons of very deadly and safe effect, etc.) the abstract possibilities of opposing a valid resistance to military force have not progressed. Engels seems to believe that the barricade is the latest discovery of the insurrectionary strategy. On the other hand, the latest cases in Thessaloniki have shown how without erecting barricades, the rioters can certainly face and with probability of success fight against the regular army. - It is perfectly legitimate to oppose reasons of principle against the use of violence in social conflicts. It is not a serious argument to oppose *technical and material* difficulties. The most

recent experience - let us cite the case of the so-called Macedonian uprising - has shown that the progress of the material force of repression has been matched by the progress of the material force of explosion. Hence the relationship that previously made the success of revolutions probable has not changed. Restoring this confidence to the masses is a debt of subversive criticism. And Engels' writing, to which I cannot deny a depressive influence on the spirit of the masses and therefore on social progress, still deserves an exhaustive answer. It is, of the writings of Engels, the least in conformity with the practical tendency of Marxism, which was and remains a great philosophy of force, a brilliant theory of intelligent violence as a factor of social progress.

After all, all the most recent experiences: the Russo-Japanese war, the Russian revolution that began, bring news denials to the conclusions of the well-known text by Engels.

The Russo-Japanese war has considerably changed the tactical notions around the means that determine the final success of the war action. All the clashes of that gigantic war ended with material collisions between the assailants and the assailed. The bayonet is back in honor. A new means of destruction was found in the hand grenade. It can be said that the Japanese have determined the ultimate success of all their battles with the rational use of this terrible means of resolution. The long-range bombing has made a bad impression. Now everyone sees for himself - without needing me to relax too much on this obnoxious subject - what applications to street warfare these latest experiences of the Russo-Japanese war allow.

In fact it seems that they have borne fruit in the Russian revolution that has begun. The combination of the general strike with the armed demonstration and the personal use of explosives is a new fact of the revolutionary experience which Engels, of course, could not take into account. But it would be a mistake not to take them into account in the evaluation of Engels's theoretical thesis, the only one we want to judge here. In fact, these lead us to conclude that, apart from the ethical value of

violence, on which we do not have to pronounce ourselves - collective and insurrectional violence is no less possible today than yesterday.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Ideal of Socialism

“Was der Sozialismus will, ist nicht das Eigenthum aufheben, sondern, im Gegentheile, individuelles Eigenthum, auf die Arbeit gegründetes Eigenthum, erst einführen”.

LASSALLE - Bastiat Schulze
in Reden, III, p. 215.

What is the concrete ideal of socialism, considered from the point of view of the historical prediction that lies at the bottom of the doctrine of the contemporary proletarian movement? - A very strange thing has happened in the Latin countries. The doctrine of contemporary socialism has entered it not for the direct diffusion of the principles and teachings of the masters of contemporary socialism, but for the disclosures that have made it commentators, propagandists or academic critics, all more or less interested in either exaggerating or distorting or to attenuate some aspects of the doctrine. And several drawbacks have arisen from this. While Marx's doctrine is wholly critical, and therefore where it cannot directly clarify and distinguish, it bears only negative hints and as logical prospects rather of what is not or will not be, than of what is or will be in order to be, as well as when returns to the historical ideals of the proletarian movement; the summaries and expositions of the partisan communicators or opponents, who more particularly attached themselves to this subject, for the practical needs of their intellectual fatigue, offered determined images and positive programs, which best responded to the need for concretization, precisely of the mind which is busy about the future. - In this respect no book or writing has exerted a greater and more pernicious influence than Mr. Schaeffle's *Quintessence of Socialism*, which in short, went around the world and was translated into the main languages of civilized countries and inserted, although the author he was anything but a socialist in

the catalogs of socialist bookstores around the world. The French editors of the second edition of the Malonian translation of this famous writing say that it "caused the collectivist doctrine to be accepted in France by a large number of consciences, which were not fully satisfied with either fragmentary and isolated ideas, or with social criticism. purely negative or sentimental and were conquered by the coherent and scientific aspect of this provisional system". Now what is said here about France and the French readers must more correctly repeat the socialists of Italy and other sites. - Except that the strange happened later. Up to a certain point, it could appear a singular revenge of history, that the writing of a conservative had to serve for the purposes of socialist dissemination and in those proportions. But the propaganda inserted on the precise and mechanical constructions of Schaeffle wanted to be baptized for "scientific socialism" and, more especially, *Marxism*. The rigid and all-in-one collectivism, like a Pomeranian grenadier put on the *alert*, of the former Austrian minister, was elevated to the honors of happy integration of Marxist criticisms and its natural, legitimate and honest complement. To depart from the barracks ideals of the Austrian minister seemed an offense to the purest and most authentic socialist spirit.

It is almost useless to note that the truth is another. It is painful to note that the critique of Marxism has never tried to solve this problem, and perhaps not even to put it in what sense Marx was a *communist* and what is meant by *communism* according to Marx's doctrines. Sorel, who is the only one who has approached the critique of Marxism from a truly scientific point of view, writes very cautiously: "je me demande dans those mesure Marx était *sérieusement* communiste et dans those mesure il était d'accord avec Engels". Sorel recalls the frequent analogies between the thought of Marx and that of Pecqueur, who was anything but an integral communist or collectivist, and blended private property with social property very well. He also notes the obscurities and the vagaries of the Manifesto, in which the positive ideals of the Communists should also have been

explicitly stated. All this leads him to believe that Marx should not have agreed too much with Engels on the conception of communism as a gigantic *factory* administered by some *businessmen*, with full powers, and masters of production. I fully agree with Sorel. On the contrary, I believe that we can go further. A study on the communist ideals of Marxism seems to me to lead to the conclusion that Marx saw in communism only a social organization in which production was directed and organized only by the workers, while the capitalist class would have disappeared entirely. Professor Antonio Labriola observes: "the historical prediction, which lies at the bottom of the doctrine of the Manifesto, and which critical communism then expanded and specified with the broadest and most minute analysis of the present world ... did not imply, as it did not it now implies neither a chronological date, *nor the anticipated painting of a social configuration*, as in the ancient and new prophecies and apocalypses ... The prediction, which the Manifesto mentioned for the first time, was, not chronological, of a foretaste or promise; but it was, to put it in a word that in my opinion expresses everything in brief, morphological". - Let's see now in what sense.

In the preface to the sixth German edition of the *Communist Manifesto*, Engels explains why the followers of the Manifesto called themselves "communists" and not generically "socialists". He then defines the fraction of the revolutionary movement of that time which was called communist: "that part of workers, which, convinced of the insufficiency of mere political transformations, promoted a fundamental transformation of society, was then called *communist*". The communism of these communists consisted in promoting "a fundamental transformation of society; But in what sense? Very obscure are the indications that are derived from the text of the *Manifesto*. In the second chapter of it, where the relations between communists and proletarians are discussed, the practical program of the communists is also sketched; but it will not be difficult for us to recognize that we are dealing with a completely negative

program, consisting in imagining some aspects of the existing one being suppressed in the new society. - "What distinguishes socialism, we read there, is not the generic abolition of property, but the abolition of bourgeois property." Shortly afterwards, in some vigorous, clear-cut, very dense views, and precisely therefore too obscure, the character of bourgeois property is defined. "Being a capitalist, you are told, does not mean taking a purely personal position, but a social one ... Capital is not a personal but a social power". What is its specific function? Exploit the work of others; make sure that work gives the capitalist an income. What the communists want to do is to deprive capital of its "class character" (*Klassen-Karakter*), that is, to ensure that the possession of the means of production does not allow anyone to take a contribution on the labor of others. As can be seen, the use of negations is frequent. We understand very clearly what communism will not be; but it is difficult for us to understand what it will be.

This passage from the *Manifesto*, which should have been the most serene and lucid, overflows instead of bitter sarcasm and ironic retaliation. Do you bourgeois accuse the Communists of wanting to destroy private property? But if you have destroyed it for nine tenths of men! You, bourgeois, say that the suppression of private property would generate universal laziness? Oh, then society would have long since gone to ruin, for nine-tenths of men work without hope of ever acquiring a property! And so on. But in this way it becomes more and more difficult to understand whether the Communists really want to abolish private property and if they want to replace it with an iron unitary organization of production. Communism is becoming more and more mysterious. - Yet, in our eyes, the obscurities of the *Manifesto* are more eloquent than any dogmatic doctrinal exposition. In the *Manifesto* it is said: "you in a word reproach us that we want to remove *your property*. We certainly want it." Here the thought returns that *communism is the negation of the bourgeois and capitalist way of producing* and not the affirmation of a special way of organizing economic enterprise. And better still below it is

said "Communism does not take away from anyone the power to appropriate social products; it only takes away the power to subjugate the work of others, through this appropriation." If we were to use these indications to define the communism of the *Manifesto* in a satisfactory way, we would have to say that communism is that social regime in which, since there is no longer wage work, and the appropriation of the products of the work of others having disappeared, production follows on behalf of the workers themselves, and in any one of those forms, or at the same time in all, which make the parallel existence of capital and the wage-earner impossible. - Now we will see that Marx, even afterwards, went no further than this negative formulation of communism.

And here a parenthesis falls by the way. The critical communism of Marxist doctrine attaches itself in more ways than one to the tradition of the Babuvist movement. Bernstein gave this proof.

It is not a fact without significance that the *Communist Manifesto*, in reviewing and criticizing the various socialist doctrines, which appeared before it, completely refrains from dealing with a doctrine which had had so much echo and had found its crown in a tragedy like that of Babeuf. It seems legitimate to suppose that the two young and brilliant authors of the *Manifesto* intentionally wanted to refrain from any judgment on that doctrine, a judgment which, for their scientific conscience, having to be absolutely negative, could have clouded the sense of lively admiration that the historical figure of the Babeuf raised in them and the gratitude they unquestionably must have felt for the intellectual father of all modern communist sects.

It is therefore in France and in the declining period of the Revolution, that the system of collectivism is becoming more precise as a doctrine and finds its material instrument in a party, which is not extinguished at all with its corifei, but is revived in all the revolutionary agitations for the which France has passed almost to the Commune of Paris, and through the *Société des*

Saisons influences the *League of the Righteous*, which later Moll, Schapper and Eccarius transformed into the *League of Communists*. This genesis is not accidental and serves marvelously to illustrate the socialist judgment that the system of collectivism must repair the evils of free competition.

France abruptly passed from the legal forms of the feudal regiment to the system of free competition and bourgeois property. Until the eve of the great revolution, the jurandas remained standing and feudal customs prevailed unless time had here and there attenuated their gravity. The transition from one legal form to another was very rapid. That such a subversion of the old systems of society should be accompanied by inconveniences of the worst kind is something that is certainly understood. Every modification of the social equilibrium, even if it is aimed at eliminating the drawbacks of the previous equilibrium, generates, at the moment of the mutation, a sum of ills infinitely greater than those which are to be remedied.

It is therefore no wonder that the revolution was followed by such dangerous demonstrations by citizens in the throes of disappointment. Every political and social upheaval leaves the recurring regret in the minds of its most sincere and enthusiastic authors: was it therefore worth it? And this is not just about the consequences of unreasonable desires, but about the inevitable conditions in which every revolution leaves society. Because, by momentarily aggravating it the political or economic malaise that has been the spur, it causes a corresponding psychological state in its authors. Hence the fact that every revolution always leaves the desire for a new one; so that, if this desire could be satisfied, society would have to abandon itself to the revolution permanently.

The new order that the French Revolution had created was the system of *free competition*. Therefore, the evils of which men complained had to be brought back by necessity of things to the *new condition posed by the social transition*; the remedy had to result, eliminating the new condition of things. And since by an easy process of analogies, the evils of the feudal system had to be

brought back to the same condition, previously supposed imperfectly operative, a system was devised as a remedy that involved the most radical and complete negation of the liberal regime: the communism of production. or consumption.

Then, as always happens in the history of doctrines and sophisms, there was no more reasoning on this point, and socialism was systematically *thought* of as the logical opposite of the regime based on free competition.

Elsewhere the transition from the system of legal constraints to the system of freedom took place gradually. Due to this slowness of the evolutionary cycle it was possible to detect two things. The first was that the new regime had advantages over the former system; the second, that the advantage consisted precisely in the subsequent developments of freedom. It was then evident that the evils of society did not arise from the liberal regime, but rather from its imperfect development. Hence it was possible to see a gigantic movement of masses stirring around two precise postulates of the liberal system; against protective customs laws and universal suffrage. While in England the working class concretely manifested, in this way, its trust in the system of freedom, in France, where the transition from feudalism to liberalism had been so abrupt and had been followed by such ferocious reactive movements that they had compromised its development, the proletariat, from the Lyons uprising to the June days, heroically fell for an empty dream of elusive communism.

As with men, so with doctrines. English socialism is not communistic, or when it is called such, it does so to obey a kind of verbal suggestion, but in reality it is only cooperative. It is certainly noteworthy that, for example, while Godwin and Babeuf are agitating and writing in the same turn of time, the one is headed to communism proper, in its most resolute and complete form and the other to a vague philanthropism, that yes and no wants to be egalitarian; and both ruthlessly attack that social regime, which has been agreed to be called capitalist and liberal.

Godwin, in his *Investigations on Political Justice*, which appeared precisely in that symptomatic 1793, which had so many anticipations and laid the germ of so many modern ideas, rejects the communist organization, the direction of production and consumption by means of the State, work in common, common meals, common warehouses for the storage of common useful things, all Babuvist ideas. Godwin wants to preserve the individual economy and private property, which he would like to be equally divided among all members of society. But this social state is only possible as a result of a transformation of feelings, by virtue of which each of us should be ready to abandon the part of his possessions that exceeds his needs.

The anti-communist idea is found in almost all British socialists. Hall (1805) would like sumptuary laws and a periodic distribution of lands. Thompson, the great Thompson, the true intellectual father of Charles Marx, to whom he suggested the most ingenious part of his theories on overproduct, overwork and income; in his *Inquiry into the Principles of the Distribution of Wealth* (1824) he is a partisan of an advanced socialism, but not of communism. His social medicine consists in organizing cooperative factories of medium capacity, which should produce everything necessary. These cooperatives should include 500 to 2000 workers and no more. They should constitute many independent units, just united by a federal bond. They should attend to field work and industrial work at the same time. Land and necessary cars should be bought with savings. All members of the cooperative would receive according to their needs.

It is also known how little communist are the ideas of Bray, Gray, other English precursors of Marx, on whom he evidently imprinted a considerable part of his ideas, re-founding them in the purifying crucible of classical German philosophy, and which must also be counted among the writers. more resolute than anti-capitalist literature, which blossomed in England on the principles of the nineteenth century. Remarkable then of all these writers is the violence of the attacks that they direct to the State, spared instead from the actual communist literature. It

seems that it is possible to conclude that they saw the remedy for the ills of society less in the communist organization of production than in the disappearance of the state.

Now the communist thought of Marxism takes place precisely between two opposite poles: the state and bureaucratic authoritarianism of primitive French socialism and the semi-anarchic liberalism of the English anti-capitalist writers of the first half of the nineteenth century. It is therefore not surprising that, subjected to these two different influences, it turned out to be almost all negative and so little inclined to morphological reconstructions. In any case, what is certain is that Marxist communism is not a pre-established and closed scheme of an immutable social type, but rather the summary formula of various industrial organizations for the purpose of production and for the guises of distribution.

II Mehring says that Marx in 1842 was not a communist, but adds that he was in 1845, when he wrote, in collaboration with Engels, the "*Heilige Familie*". However, it is difficult to understand what the Communism of the *Heilige Familie* consisted of. In the passage in which, according to Mehring, there is Marx's confession to communism, we read in fact: "there is no need for a great intuition to derive from the doctrines of materialism on the original goodness and equal cognitive endowment of men, on the omnipotence of experience, habit, education, on the influence of external circumstances capable of modifying man, on the high importance of industry, on the right to enjoyment, etc. , their necessary connection with socialism and communism. If man forms all his knowledge and sensations in the world of the senses and of sensory experience, he thus comes to want to organize the external world in which he perceives what is truly human and feels man. If, *of course, interest* is the principle of every morality, he comes to want that the private interests of men coincide with those of all. If man is not free in the materialistic sense, that is, free, not by means of the negative force of being able to avoid this or that, but with the positive force of explaining his true individuality, the crime of crime should not be punished.

individual, but to destroy the social womb of the crime and give everyone the social space for the development of his essential organic qualities. If man is formed by circumstances, circumstances must be rendered human. If man is made social by nature, he develops his full nature in society, and the power of his nature must be measured not by the power of the single individual, but by the power of society ". These are humanitarian generalities of the kind that Marx and Engels mocked two years later in the *Communist Manifesto*, about "German socialism" or "true socialism".

These are visibly the first steps of the doctrine; vice versa we come to its most perfect enunciation, to the famous seventh paragraph of the twenty-fifth chapter of the first capital, where the historical trend of capitalist accumulation is described. What social form will ever replace the capitalist regime? Marx speaks of it very vaguely. He writes: "But capitalist production produces its own negation with the necessity of a natural process ... *This does not reconstitute private property* (Privateigentum), BUT INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY (individuelle Eigentum) *on the basis of the acquisitions of the capitalist era*: of cooperation and common possession of the land and of the means of production produced with the same labor".

Nobody will say that these expressions sin for excessive clarity. What is the difference between private property and individual property? Does Marx refer to a difference between private (monopolistic) use of the means of production and public use (rent) of the means of production, of which however he resists as a shareholding equal to the amount of the value of the instrument, made materially available to society? Or does he mean more simply that the then subsistent individual property will be the only one compatible with the acquisitions of the capitalist era, that is, of the material socialization of labor and land (large production), and therefore will be limited to simple means of personal consumption? Does he simply want to establish a contrast between the (common) social system of production and the system of distribution, necessarily

individualistic, that is, based on personal consumption (individual, of the product? - I believe that all these explanations are equally plausible and most likely Marx wanted understand them all. But when in the expressions referred to above we no longer look for a criterion of distribution, but an indication of the shape of the future productive organism (whether unitary, differentiated, centralized, state, trade union or individual) it seems that they can give us an answer more conclusive.

Immediately afterwards Marx warns: "The transformation of disseminated private property, based on the work of individuals, into capitalist property, is naturally a longer, harder and more difficult process than the transformation of capitalist property, already *based on the process of social production*, in social property". - Here Marx clearly distinguishes the legal process from the economic process. The economic process is already complete. The mode of production is no longer social. It is only a question of adapting the right to the fact, that is, of transforming the private property of the monopolist into the property of the associates. No additional economic transformation is needed for now. The socialization of production has already taken place through the mechanism of the capitalist system. A new mode of production (state or municipal) must not be substituted for the capitalist one, but only a different form of distribution. The mode of production remains that established by capitalist society. It is only a question of reviewing the *title deeds*.

The point conquered is of the highest importance. Capitalist society, in fact, does not implement a single form of industrial organization, that is, the association of the various coefficients of production (land, capital, labor), but very varied. Nothing is more repugnant to her than uniformity. It therefore seems that, if by collectivism we mean a unitary production system, which takes place according to a single plan established by the elective or technical managers of production, this notion is not a Marxist point of view. This will become clearer still from another angle of Marxist criticism. We shall shortly see that the

“socialization of production” is understood by Marx in very varied ways, all reducible under this generic qualification: that the mode of production results from an association and excludes the capitalist, that is, a private monopoly of the means of production. - When this notion becomes clear it will become clear that the program of state or municipal collectivism, but unitary, should not be confused with the communist system of Karl Marx.

Faced with the capitalist mode of production, Marx always poses nothing but the “*Produktionsweise der associirten Arbeit*”, the mode of production of associated labor. He never claimed that this association of labor should take a single form. He writes: “for the consideration of work in common, that is, immediately socialized, we do not need to go back to the primitive form of it, which we encounter on the threshold of the history of each people. A closer example to us is offered by the patriarchal land industry of a peasant family, which produces for its own consumption grain, livestock, linen, clothes, etc. The different things present themselves to the family as different products of their family work, and not to themselves as commodities. The different jobs that produce these products: agriculture, pastoralism, weaving, spinning, tailoring, etc. , they are in their natural form social functions, because they are functions of the family, which possesses its own primitive division of labor, as does the system of mercantile production”. - Even then in peasant family production we have "socialization of production". This consists in the fact of: *a)* common management of the industry; *b)* in the common possession of the means of production; *c)* in the individual property, of all the single members of the family, without exception, on a part of the undivided means of production.

In addition to this, Marx knows another form of socialized organization of work, and it is the *Verein freier Menschen*, the productive union of free men (cooperation?). This union is characterized by the fact of men "who work with common means of production and consciously deliver their individual labor

forces as a single social labor force." What phenomena does this union give rise to? "The total product of union is a social product. A part of this product will again serve as a means of production: it will remain social. But another part will be consumed by the members of the union as a means of subsistence. It will then be distributed among them. The species of this distribution will vary with the special form of the social productive organism and the corresponding subjective evolution of the producers". - Even in this form of productive association the juridical relations that roughly exist in the peasant family are manifested. It is important above all to note that Marx admits a different form of distribution depending on the special form assumed by the productive organism) and on the degree of internal evolution of the producers. All this compared with what Marx later affirms in *Capital* itself, regarding the socialization of work by capitalist society which has already taken place, a socialization which, of course, assumes different aspects and degrees according to the industrial process of the individual branches and companies of production; leads to admitting the need for the coexistence in the future communist society of different forms of industrial organization (family, cooperative, state, trade union, individual). In any case, it is certain that the generic "socialization of the means of production" foreseen by Marx is not a single type of productive organization, but seems to refer to various productive systems, all of which realize the socializing form.

That Marx sees in cooperative production the typical form of so-called "communist" production, that is, based on work in common and on the appropriation of the product of labor only by actual and direct workers, is clear from the study he makes, in the third book of *Capital*, around the entrepreneur's earnings, considered by some as a management salary. Marx notes there that any combination of workers necessitates surveillance work and this in any case. But in those forms of production such as slavery, servile and capitalist in which production is founded on the "contrast between the worker, considered as the immediate producer, and the owner of the means of production", additional

management work is necessary. The cooperative factories have proved the uselessness of the capitalist as a manager. This management work does not lie in the nature of things, but in the nature of the capitalist process, which presupposes the antagonism of the worker and the capitalists. Not soon the men manage the production on their own, the capitalist becomes useless to the production, and the production manager becomes a salaried of the cooperators. The cooperative factories present the intuitive type of a-capitalist production, which expression seems to us the only one that can conveniently define the nature of the production system of the future society.

And it seems to us that it is from this point of view that the predictions on the future structure of society should be considered, to which Marx indulges, perhaps for the first and last time in his long career as a communist writer, in the confidential letter on the Gotha program of the German socialist democracy. Marx speaks of the communist society which will immediately leave the capitalist society. Here, too, the qualifications that Marx indicated as specific to socialized production reappear, both with regard to family and cooperative industries, in the first volume of *Capital*; remarkable coincidence, taking into account the disparity of time. "Within the communist society, based on the common ownership of the means of production, the producers do not exchange their products The single producer receives exactly what he gives. What he has given is his individual amount of work He receives from the company a receipt showing that he has done so much work (after the deduction of his work for the common fund) and with this receipt he withdraws from the social fund of consumer products as much as it amounts to a corresponding job. The same amount of work that he has given to society in one form, he takes it up again in another". - The achievement of this end does not impose a unitary regime of production, much less of state collectivism: a production of cooperatives, or a production regime based on the most absolute freedom of trade can lead to the result that the producer takes back to his own society "same amount of work"

that he gave her. The allusion to the "receipt" is merely an example. Nothing prevents currency from continuing to be used and price denominations to be preserved. After all, humanity has been accustomed for centuries to this way of accounting for values and it will not be easy to renounce it for the sake of our "receipts" on which, instead of reading: lire, francs and marks, hours, minutes, seconds. It would not be easy to persuade men not to laugh at passing away.

And here - at least as an example - I would like to demonstrate how a regime of full freedom of trade would achieve the same economic ends as a communist regime, as it has now been defined, or a unitary regime of production. The following observations - he repeats - have a pure character of logical exemplification. They must not exchange with a new program or with the indication of a new doctrine. But in the meantime it is good to recognize that socialism understood as a means of excluding all parasitic remuneration coincides - in its results with the action of free competition.

The results of free competition - considered theoretically - refer to three orders of facts; 1° to the price of the products; 2° to the price of the remuneration; 3° to the equilibrium of production. As regards this last point, it should be noted that the exercise of free competition would have the consequence:

1° that industries would be established in places and regions, where they were most useful;

2° that the industries themselves would be forced to apply all the advances that technology is capable of achieving;

3° that since production is governed by interest, it would tend to balance itself with demand and thus make the phenomenon of crises less and less possible or more tenuous in its consequences. And that for this purpose, can be met without the need for such a fundamental establishment of society, which would be required by the substitution of collective ownership for the individual ownership of the technical means of production, is shown by the fact, as I have already noted elsewhere, that countries have more solid and old industrial structure that exist

in Europe, namely France and England, were less affected by the severe economic crisis, which, which began in Europe towards the end of the 1900s, gradually liquidated itself in the spring of last year.

Now, it should be noted, that neither England nor France enjoy complete economic freedom.

In passing, does not free competition operate on the product market in the sense of causing maximum collective well-being? This demonstration given the hundred times and in all forms, analytical, graphic, logical and historical, should by now have penetrated all minds. It is reduced to this simple proposition, that free competition, by not creating privileged positions for anyone, puts every producer in a position to offer his product up to the limit in which he makes neither gain nor loss, while at the same time it forces him to adopt all the technical advances, and therefore to make the consumer pay a cost, which is the minimum of any possible costs. The producers are so well convinced that a regime of free competition would only be in the interests of the consumer, that they do not hold back from declaiming the drawbacks of competition and form those formidable unions whose visible purpose is to obtain protective duties. The action of the latter frustrates the benefits of free trade and allows two things: to make the consumer pay an arbitrary price, corresponding to the cost of the product plus the difference in the duty; delaying or preventing technical progress, so that the consumer pays a cost, so to speak, already exceeded in the face of technological progress, which he would not suffer if he could provide himself with the things necessary for his needs on the market if the cost was minimal. The effectiveness of free competition on the product market is no longer questioned by anyone. Except for a tiny fraction, which, inspired by equivocal electoral interests, appears ignorant of the elementary principles of economic science, all socialists recognize the efficacy of free trade on the product market and gladly admit that it pleases the greatest number, that is, the classes. female workers. To deny

these benefits, only the most sluggish industrialists and their code holders of the small newspaper remain.

And how does free competition operate on the market for the remuneration of production factors? - Compared to capital, its efficacy presents an undoubted utility for the working masses. With the mobility of supply it lowers the remuneration of *mere capitalist possession* to minimum limits. In the most economically developed countries, capital separated from *direct industrial activity* yields almost nothing. Bank deposits, for periods of time less than one year, do not give the right to even a penny of interest, and there are banks that ask to be remunerated for the liability they encounter by accepting a deposit. Where there is free absolute competition of capital, mere capitalist possession separated from the intellectual function of directing and administering the factory has lost a considerable part of its importance. It no longer allows a conspicuous free withdrawal on the work of the worker. And it should be noted that the free competition of capital is not a *fait accompli* today. By borrowing large sums of money for its unproductive ends and by offering especially high interest rates, it takes from the capital market a mass of wealth, which, if offered in that market, would further bend the interest rate and make, perhaps, the interest of the naked and unemployed ownership of capital is absolutely nil. But the interest of the public debt itself is reduced to a small thing, and, if the capitalists did not have the right to rob each other in those special gambling dens which are the great stock exchanges, it would be questionable whether they could satisfy all needs. of a sumptuous life, with the means made available to them by the interests of the public debt.

And let's move on to values.

The law of value which, under the action of free competition, is being formed tends to guide the monetary price of things around their cost, that is, to prevent the seller from gaining overall profit or loss from his own sale. Capital accumulation also implies a cost resulting from the pain of saving; as long as this penalty is met, the capital deserves a

remuneration, called interest. But, fortunately, the cost of capitalist accumulation tends to decrease. In fact, if it is evident that to save some money necessary for the future needs of the worker from a short daily wage, a truly considerable effort of will and control over oneself is required, it cannot be said to be the same as soon as a certain amount has been reached. accumulation and have a certain amount of income. Now, since the remuneration of all human services is determined at the margin - precisely under the action of the law of competition - it follows that the remuneration of the minimum accumulating effort becomes the normal rate of all capitalist accumulations. But with the progress of civilization and with the growth of the general goal of remuneration, the painful effort of accumulating diminishes and is sometimes completely annulled. Hence the fact that the law of interest expresses a notable tendency towards the reduction of the rate of capitalist remuneration itself.

As a result of this same law of value, the goal of wages tends to rise. We have said that the law of value tends to balance itself around cost, except for any theoretical dispute, here quite out of place, on how economic equilibrium determines this cost; but if, in the course of historical progress, the cost of capitalist accumulation decreases, the cost of labor, that is, of the labor force, increases instead. And this is a common sense observation. The worker who contented himself, some forty years ago, with supporting his life and his family with soup and bad bread, now has infinitely greater needs. The so-called protective laws of work, putting a barrier to the exploitation of children and women, have contributed considerably to raise the value of the workforce. Then, through the trade unions, the workers managed to overturn the effectiveness of competition. This no longer establishes the mercantile value of labor at the lower margin, represented by the cost of the labor force of the worker more easily satisfied, or at all devoid of means of subsistence; but at the upper margin, represented by the worker of more difficult tastes, and thus the law of the value of labor power does not oscillate around the lowest cost of labor, but the highest cost.

With this wise conception of the effects of the laws of competition, an inverse law has gradually been developed for wages and for the capitalist interest, and we are therefore faced with a tendential law of continued growth. The natural law of value, considered to operate together with workers' coalitions and competition, therefore develops two opposite tendencies, one aimed at the reduction and abolition of the rate of profit, *the other at the increase in the rate of wages. to the reduction of all remuneration to those of direct labor only* (manual and intellectual).

If the laws of production were none other than these, there would be more contrast between the economic results of free competition and those of a unitary regime of production (collectivism?). It seems to me that there would be no difference. Free competition would automatically achieve that goal of socialism which would seem to consist in the evolution of all remunerations and all remunerations that do not correspond to an economic activity that produces general advantages. Unfortunately, free competition is an abstract hypothesis that in many cases nature (monopolies) in many others legal devices (trusts, duties, premiums, etc.) exclude from the field of immediate economic reality.

But it is hardly necessary to warn that all the industrial fields that have a natural monopoly as a presupposition evade the laws of the liberal economy and yet they determine a conscious effort of society, aimed at subjecting them, in public form, to the control of the whole society.

Hearing these truths more or less vaguely, Sorel wonders: if socialism is not the pursuit of collectivist society, what is it? And he replies: "Socialism is the workers' movement, it is the revolt of the proletariat against the employers' institutions, it is the organization, both economic and ethical, which we see taking place before our eyes to fight against bourgeois traditions". Except that it is necessary to define better. This workers' movement will have its aims; the revolt against the employers' institutions will tend to replace the employers' institutions with

something else; and this same ethical and economic organization will be defined by certain qualities of it. Doctrinal socialism, I will say to use a word that expresses the reference to simple theory, rather than consisting in the movement, in the revolt, in the organization of the working classes, will consist in the forms that they will assume and in the aims that will be proposed. Now, in reality, the workers' movement, reflected in the light of socialism, is precisely the struggle for the elimination of all capitalist profits, and therefore of the capitalist class itself, as distinct from the working class and considered necessary for production. And no one can a priori determine in *which* concrete and juridically constituted institutions the working class will celebrate the full implementation of this ideal. But that's not enough. Like any society divided into classes, it needs a complex. of oppressive and repressive organs to maintain the differences just mentioned; since the working class tends to the formation of a productive organism or of various organisms of this kind without classes and in which the technical division of intellectual (managerial), manual (material), rational (saving) labor does not give rise to differences of classes, it tends to the elimination of all organs of this kind, of which the highest is the State). He then condemns all the moral and religious ideology that class societies have been constituting to the same fate). But socialism - is it still necessary to repeat it? - not is, nor could it consist in the monotonous repetition of the word: collectivism or the alleged means that could lead to it: class struggle, but in the subsequent elaboration of the subjective and objective conditions that lead to the result of a classless society, without a state, without repressive morality .

The working class elaborates these conditions on its own and carries out revolutionary work - as we have defined it in the first pages of this paper - snatching some of its attributes from the traditional authoritarian organism, the State, and using it to wage the struggle against capitalist society. It does not want to place itself under the protection of the state, but, on the contrary, it wants to eliminate any influence of the state on the course of

its evolution towards the abolition of capitalism. Now the politicians of socialism do not look favorably on this trend and use the qualification of anarchist towards it. For them, the social revolution consists more or less consciously in the fact that the workers elect a majority of socialists to public office, who will then do the "good" of the workers. Before reaching this ideal, the workers have nothing better to do than place themselves under their tutelage. In Italy, where the practical crisis of socialism soon assumed the most acute forms of political carnascialism, right-thinking socialists become hydrophobic at the very thought of the abolition of the state. Statism and parliamentarism, this is the playful combination of Italian socialism. With these two formidable means it will move the universe.

How do the workers prepare for the realization of extreme ideals, or rather, how do they subsequently place and implement them? Hardly a detailed and circumstantial examination of all forms and manifestations of the workers' movement could reveal this to us. Here we are barely hinting at certain general conditions under which the revolutionary aims of the working class are realized.

The working class cannot emancipate itself if it fails at the same time to seize production and absorb political power. The forms under which these types gradually take place are very varied. Let's exemplify. In his recent book on labor conflicts, Yves Guyot sponsors the development of anonymous labor companies (labor cooperatives), which would assume the supply of a specific job, for a certain global remuneration, accepting the raw material and the tools anticipated by the client, and then redistributing, in their own way, and according to conventional agreements, the fruit of common work. The development of this system, of which the Guyot admirably sees the great productive advantages, would lead to the real abolition of the individual wage-earner. The most perfect form of these limited companies is the Parisian printing team, a group of workers offered directly under certain conditions by the Parisian Union of Printing Workers. Now it is not anyone who does not see the admirable developments to

which, from the point of view of the abolition of capitalism, this system would lead. One can imagine the workers' union embracing the universality of the workers of a single branch of an industry, bargaining on uniform terms with all the capitalists on behalf of all the workers; constituting a kind of common fund of all remuneration, to be redistributed according to a criterion of high justice to the individual members, for example, taking into account the offspring, health conditions, strength, etc. This union - truly state within the state - exercises the management of the various insurance companies, removing the workers from the control of the state, that is, of a power extraneous to their will. We can go further. It can be imagined that, at a certain point in its evolution, the workers' union *rents capitalists from the capitalists*, against a certain remuneration, and manages them cooperatively, both in a unitary manner, and by setting up many individual and detached cooperatives, which would have separate accounts. and distinct. And finally it can be imagined that the federation of the various unions could have become so strong that it refused any consideration for the rent on capital, that is, that it could take over without compensation. The revolution would then be complete. The capitalist class would need to work in order to live. The trade unions, antimonopoly organizations, and therefore open to all, would enthusiastically welcome the capitalists of yesterday who have become the comrades of today and would use their indisputable managerial and managerial qualities.

This is one of the probable ways in which the working class can succeed in the first of its revolutionary aims: to gradually take over production. The second remains: to absorb political power. Sorel has studied very well in his wonderful writing on the socialist future of the workers' unions how this end can be achieved. We can add that when the union embraced the totality of the working class of a trade, and this were the case for all the unions, the hypothetical federation of the unions would embrace within its bosom the enormous majority of the entire population. It could therefore subject the majority of the population to a rule

of its own, independent of that of the state body, extraneous to it. The question would then arise: why should so-called public affairs be discussed and decided outside the union? The union usefully replaces the state. When the former has managed to seize the means of production, there will be no construct to leave the artificial machinery of the state standing. The trade union commissions will be able to manage very well all problems that are not strictly economic (hygiene, traffic, public services of all kinds, etc.). Politics proper, consisting of the frictions of classes and their subspecies, will have ceased to live with the difference of classes. So we think hypothetically possible the reabsorption of the state by the trade union. That then the nature of men and the force of circumstances will want to arrange that as *extreme ideals* of the workers' movement they are never fully achieved, is still a plausible and hypothetically admissible thing. But this observation in no way prejudices the accuracy of the survey on the conditions that *tend to* lead to the full emancipation of the workers. *The revolutionary method of the socialist movement consists in promoting the aim of the takeover by workers' organizations, of the management of production (manual and intellectual), thanks to the concomitant action of the decomposition of every authoritarian power (State, Party, etc.) extraneous to the pure and simple workers' organization.*

With this end and with these intentions the workers participate in the political life of a country, compete in the elections for public offices, discuss and deliberate in elective assemblies. Political action for the revolutionary proletariat consists in the use of administrative mechanisms to transfer power from the state to the union, from central authority to individual citizens. Yet this is the action of adversary and enemy, agent of dissolution and paralysis, of demolition and worse. By political action the revolutionary proletariat does not subordinate its aims to those of the state, but implements them through or against it.

Naturally, to achieve this end, the proletariat must form itself into a political party, separating actual political action from

economic action. But while the logic of things and the most elementary historical prudence would advise keeping the economic and political struggles united in the same trade union body, the splitting of the workers' movement into a political and economic movement makes it possible to subordinate this to that and the predominance in that either of workers' factions, or, what is infinitely worse, of bourgeois classes who are self-styledly convinced of socialism.

The formation of the political party independent of the economic movement of the proletariat makes it impossible to control the social quality of the elements that enter it. The professional bourgeois of politics do not fail to exploit their superior knowledge by apparently placing it at the service of the proletariat, but by making this mistake of their own views. Thus politics from an instrument of emancipation becomes an amateur exercise of personal skills. Every power of transformation is made to reside in the parliaments and the *superstition of legality* becomes the surprising differentiating character of the most revolutionary of the parties of our civil age, of the one who wants to abolish wages and found a society of equals. Capitalist society is to be demolished, but for the benefit of the state. Increasing the powers of the state is the supreme ideal of the moment. In France, the Jaurès socialists have zealously supported all the proposals made by the government against free education, under the pretext of waging war on priests and nuns. What the proletarians would gain by being dominated by the state power, rather than by the capitalists, no one can understand.

This degenerative phenomenon naturally derives from the constitution of the socialist party as a political party independent of the economic movement of the working class. When such a split has come true completely and perfectly, the socialist party becomes the political faction, which has autonomous group goals, sometimes distinct from those of the class it claims to represent. The irruption of the men of this party in the elective assemblies is no longer the sign of the prevailing of the working class over the bourgeois class: but of the prevailing of the

electoral interests of a specific party, whatever it is called, over another. Just as the Jacobin conquest represented rather the overwhelming of a faction than of a class, the socialist conquest might not represent the triumph of the proletariat at all, but of new masters who, in the name of socialism, dominated society.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Worker-Socialism

Passage of socialism from utopia to science! How many times has it been talked about! But how much utopianism there is still in socialist conceptions! Utopianism? There are many kinds; but the worst, certainly is that of humble practical reason, the one that is revealed in the contrast between the grandiosity of the end and the creeping humility of the medium, that shopkeeper's utopianism that wants to subvert the world by remaining at peace with all the Christian neighbor and he does not realize the incongruity of his means with the end he proposes. Except that he is poorer and more narrow-minded, what distinguishes this utopianism from the visions and fantasies of those thinkers that we commonly use to describe as utopians?

This utopianism of practical reason, which lies at the bottom of every objectively sincere conception of socialist reformism, it can be said, feeds on the spontaneous illusions that the daily political process is suggesting. Politics is action and very often action which is an end in itself; in its parliamentary form, above all, action for action, mixing of men and things for the pure purpose of masking the uselessness of the work. Real changes in society and customs also arise from this action. Parliaments make laws on a daily basis that they dispose and prohibit. Society can be said to *reform* every day. Hence a certain inclination of our spirit to exaggerate the importance of the reforming effectiveness of the law and to infinitely shift the boundaries of its action. Nobody asks what are the limits of the reforming action of the law, and our spirit ends up by persuading itself that in reality this action has no limits. At the bottom of the psychology of reformist socialism we find an enormous illusion about the transforming power of the law.

Yet it can be said that at any moment we can grasp some decisive denial of this claim. The *fundamental economic*

relationship of the successive economic forms of human society is infinitely more rigid, heavier and more tenacious than what we cannot imagine. To speak only of capitalist society, this has passed victoriously through the most varied political, religious and moral revolutions, without the substantial relationship between capitalist and worker being altered. The same system of commercial exchanges, the technique, in a word, of the *circulation* of the products and instruments of capitalist industry has been transformed and expanded, without the juridical relationship between capitalist and wage-earners, which presides over industrial *production*, being affected by this. significant influence. If we make the beginnings of the capitalist industrial system (wage system) dating from the beginning of the eighteenth century, for England and France, we will have to conclude that two centuries of history, in which so many revolutions, so many wars, so many technical upheavals are happened, they have uselessly passed over the head of the system of capitalist production. This shows that if the environment within which an economic organism takes place can be reformed, it is perfectly insensitive to the changes that occur in the environment itself. Whenever an attempt has been made to influence the fundamental laws of the dominant economic regime, this has produced reactions in the opposite direction that have soon re-established the equilibrium, artificially disturbed by the will of men acting by design. Thus was born the conception of the natural laws of the economy, around which so many misunderstandings have arisen.

The observation of the partial possibility of modifying the organization of a society, not giving rise to the restriction that this possibility is limited to the simple environment of a specific social organism, offers us the psychological genesis of reformism. The further observation that reform is largely *action from outside*, that is, voluntary action that relies on certain institutes and sets certain legal mechanisms in motion, explains the reformist obsession with wanting to "mix with life" and therefore participate the functioning of existing official bodies. Now, in

reality, this action can also be beneficial, as long as it is constantly watched by the awareness of its relativity, that is, until the reformist action is mistaken for a kind of action that can lead, in itself, and for the infinite extension of its functioning, to subvert the basis of the ruling regime. In fact, experience shows that when a revolutionary party (- a party that aims to subvert and radically change existing social relations -) acts reformistically and by entering into existing legality, it does not fail to degenerate and corrupt.

Sorel examined two interesting cases of socialist degeneration, which occurred in France due to this confusion between the revolutionary end and the reformist means. French socialism from 1848 to 1851 worked precisely in the ways of "practical" systems. The second empire claimed to have been the executor of this kind of socialism. It benefited from the advice and assistance of all reasonable Saint-Simonians and Fourierists. The second case is that of contemporary French socialism, to which we ourselves, in the preceding pages, have turned our attention. It seems that socialism cannot participate in the practice of bourgeois society without being corrupted. People who want to work on the transformation of capitalist society, by entering the official gears of this society, end up realizing that they have only worked to consolidate it. Of course, the parliamentary abstention of anarchists is not completely far-fetched. After all, who is unaware that there is no theory or political conduct that does not respond at least to some social need?

As socialism has become parliamentary, it has become powerless. It is impossible to conceive of a more cheerful spectacle than the gigantic German socialist party, with three million voters reduced to trembling that they do not take away the universal suffrage, with which, moreover, it has done so little. It seems that the socialists have not yet managed to understand the nature and role of parliaments in our bourgeois society. A class, such as the capitalist class, whose members have no homogeneous economic interests and are in a state of natural

competition with each other, needed precisely to create a political body that had no influence on the fundamental economic process of society. This body was not supposed to be anything other than a consultation on those interests that can be considered common or to all the components of the capitalist class, such as the defense of public order and property, or to all citizens, as in a certain sense, and to a certain extent, justice and national independence. The incompetence of parliaments and parliamentarians on all strictly technical issues, which Spencer condemns as a defect of elective assemblies, is instead an organic necessity for assemblies which only have to be resolved questions of so-called general interest. Hence also the lack of all laws dealing with special issues, many of which would be a perfect enigmatic, if they were not helped by the aid of the regulations, prepared by bureaucrats, certainly a little better informed than the gentlemen members of parliament.

It is a cliché that nine-tenths of the laws passed by parliamentarians are useless. After a while, no one remembers it anymore. It is natural that the participation of the socialists in elective assemblies could not change the nature of the latter. Even the socialists began to make useless laws, which were either superfluous, and nobody paid attention to them, or were contrary to the capitalist interest, and nobody applied them. This led to an exacerbation of the parliamentary principle, and the socialists, instead of reporting the impotence of the law on the nature of parliaments, came to refer to their scarce number and lack of mass assistance. So little by little, parliamentary superstition triumphed. The concept of the social revolution was removed from its Marxist hinges. The social revolution was no longer - practically - a process from within, i.e. the result of a series of changes in the equilibrium of the individual parts of the economic organism, but a process from the *outside*, i.e. the result of a series of 'legislative influence and friendly agreements between the various political parties represented in the parliaments. These things, as is natural, were not openly confessed, but they could very well be deduced from the nature

of the conduct that the official socialist parties of the various countries were carrying out. This is the true genesis of the degenerative crisis of political socialism.

To overcome the present difficulties, socialism must return to its economic and worker origins. We must all return to Marx without universal suffrage and without parliamentary system, to the Marx of 1848 and 1871. The social revolution has an entirely economic foundation: the instrument of this revolution is the wage worker. Any other conception of socialism is absurd. It is these humble truths which do not lose merit that are repeated. In fact, there are truths (scientific), which need only be stated once, and there are others (practices), which should be repeated often. "Socialism will only triumph to the extent that the proletariat, which is the historical agent, will be able to realize it. The increase of the working capacity is therefore the essential problem of socialism. This is certainly a trivial finding. But it constitutes the starting point of revolutionary socialism and we must always highlight it".

We conceive of a socialism in perfect agreement with the fundamental laws of the economy. We have learned from the latter that the remuneration of the factors of production, among which labor is precisely, do not derive from the will of men or from the intervention of the legislator in the economic process, but from the productivity of labor, from the conditions of supply of the labor itself, by the limit of capital increase, by the degree of elevation of the worker and in general by all the remaining conditions of the economic equilibrium. The economic process is determined by its organic law, which does not allow itself to be violated on whim by men. Epper all that social legislation, which reformism promises to the expectant populace cannot exert a notable influence on the fate of the worker. We conceive the action of the trade union as producing directly, and not by means of a pressure that exerts its own results on public authorities. Experience and universal practice teach us that the professional organization, by improving the technical and moral quality of the worker, automatically acts in the sense of raising the

remuneration of the work, precisely because it contributes to improving and more copiously manufacturing the product. In the incessant application of this principle, we see the force that will produce the social revolution. We recall, as the fundamental Marxist teaching teaches, all the consequent transformations of society to the transformations of the economy produced by way of spontaneous development. The basis and substance of socialism is the workers' organization, passing through proximate and contingent ends to wider and more distant ends. The gradimeter of the social revolution is the development of the revolutionary consciousness, that is, antithetical to the existing society, of the trade union. The *autonomous government of production by the working class*, which summarizes what the oratory phrase is called the triumph of socialism, is reached - and only in this way - by the successive invasions of the trade organization in the economic process. The revolutionary act of taking possession of the means of production of each industry by the union of the workers of that industry determines the passage from capitalism to socialism, but it is directly connected to all the acts of common life that the trade union is forced to perform.

In the union of the workers of every industry two offices are potential and omnipresent: 1° to exploit the circumstances of the market, in order to increase the current remuneration of labor and improve the remaining conditions; 2° prepare, implement and supervise the transformation of the fundamental economic relationship. And there is a close connection between the two offices. The union was born out of need and continuously implements the intention to improve working conditions. It is not his office to worry about the so-called "conditions of the industry". The inability of industry to bear a certain cost increase - under which the concept of rising wages and improvements in working conditions falls - is demonstrated by the simple fact that it succeeds in rejecting it. After all, the office of the trade union is precisely to push the industrial organization towards its greater perfection, in which it becomes possible for it to bear an increase in wages.

Wages unfortunately differ from region to region, from country to country. Why shouldn't the Neapolitan workers try to reach the wages of their Milanese comrades, and the latter the wages of the Parisian or London workers? Dissatisfaction is the mainspring of human progress. Individual and class selfishness often gives birth to the most wonderful benefits for the universality of men. Considered trade union action is in many parts of the world the push for a more perfect industrial organization, for a better association of productive factors.

Yet it is perfectly possible to understand that the character of capitalism places a limit on the possibility of ever better combining the factors of production and therefore of enduring new wage increases. The movement of wage increases must at some point meet the resistance of the difficulties inherent in the capitalist regime and give rise to the need to remove the obstacle. This need does not arise simultaneously for all industries, but always for all.

We perfectly intend that at this point the Syndicate will take over the production of that single industry. This is the revolutionary moment par excellence, what I have elsewhere called *the decisive coup*. But how the taking over of the means of production will happen, we cannot predict. The only thing that seems to us not only probable, but certain, is that such a step cannot be taken except by the trade union, that is, by the association of those workers who already possess the necessary technical capacity to manage production. It could also be envisaged a form of *renting* the means of production by the trade union (- rent which would soon turn into real expropriation -), as a kind of redemption against indemnity. Certainly rent, redemption and immediate tampering can accompany and follow each other according to whether the circumstances will suggest the need.

The essential thing in this whole process is to conceive the trade union as the instrument of the social revolution. In fact, if for us socialists the foundation of the future social revolution is a radical transformation of the current technical-economic

relations, it is clear that only those who possess the necessary technical aptitude for production can take the initiative. The parliamentary catastrophe heralded by reformism and the universal bureaucratization of production that it carries among its own purposes belong to the most cretinely utopian phase of socialism and which is not truly overcome except in the syndicalist conception.

At the base of this long process that tends to place the association of workers in the place of the capitalists managing a single industry, there is the constant and periodic qualification of workers to the technical and administrative offices that are agreed to the managers and masters of production, that is the transformation of the workers' union into a complete and synthetic organ, that is, into an organ that represents the entirety of the worker as a *citizen* carrying out political offices, as an *economic man* who gets his prosaic daily bread, as an *individual* who has a person his which you seek to enrich with knowledge and improve in practical life. The social synthesis that bourgeois society has broken, separating man from citizen, the Syndicate tries to reconstruct, and strives to do so *potentially*, that is, as something that must happen and tends to be produced with a series of constant efforts. The result of all these efforts is the recomposition of that social synthesis which restores the means of production to the worker, which establishes the autonomous government of production, subject to pure economic laws, derived from the very nature of the technical process, that is, that social order. which all the socialists from Proudhon to Marx have called "anarchy."

In this conception of socialism, immediate action and revolutionary action go hand in hand. The so-called reforms are many means for the realization of the revolutionary goal. The revolution comes, so to speak, from the bowels of the economic movement and results from the successive modifications that the proletariat knows how to impress on the external environment of production and leads to the decisive act by which the workers finally reduce the economic enterprise to their hands. Nobody

can predict when this time will come. The only thing that can be said is that that moment will not come before the working class has reached a high level of education and culture, indispensable conditions for ensuring the progressive continuity of the social movement. Therefore the main office of trade union education is to develop the technical, intellectual and moral attitudes of the workers, enabling them to manage public affairs.

The germ of political corruption and party degeneration lies in the split between politics and economics. The bourgeois political parties so easily and continuously give a show of their moral misery and technical incapacity, because precisely in them the gap between economic interests and political representation is the greatest. A real mental effort must be made to bring the activity of the bourgeois parties back to some fundamental interest of some group of the bourgeoisie. In any case, the party lives a life completely independent of the class. In general, we see that the life of the parties is healthier - for example: in Germany - where the relationship between them and the social classes is clearer and more continuous. And the Socialist Party itself has generally failed to keep itself immune from political corruption, except because in it, despite everything, the contact between politics and the economy, between the adherents of the "idea" and the members of the class that the "idea" purports to represent.

But if it is not permissible to speak of real political corruption towards the Socialist Party, we must ask ourselves whether it can be seriously disputed that the policy of the Socialist Party has not caused many disappointments. Sorel rightly observes that the events that have taken place in recent years have helped to declare the true nature of the various socialist doctrines more than twenty years of discussion would have done. The day the socialists possessed a particle of power, it became easy to understand what they meant by the destruction of the state, the emancipation of the workers, the political struggle, etc. In the following chapter we will examine the case of Italian socialism, in which it is very easy to see how the most

rigorous theoretical principles are combined with the most relaxed and opportunistic political conduct. Presently, in almost all parts of the world, socialism is undergoing a very serious crisis, which in the final analysis can be traced back to a kind of contradiction between theory and practice, between general principles and party politics. Augusto Bebel willingly poses as champion of Marxist orthodoxy, but he also knows how to give the *Reichstag* good advice on the color of soldiers' uniforms, so that they can more comfortably carry out their office of defense of the integrity of the homeland and ... of the capitalist order.

The splitting of politics from the economic movement into socialism must finally cease. Party and class must be one. As long as the party is separated from the class, there is a potential danger that the party will substitute its own special organizational interests for itself for the interests of the class it claims to represent. After all, this replacement has already happened in many bourgeois parties. The class of *politicians* is not an abstraction of theory, but a concrete reality of everyday life. The parties then tend to form separate bodies, with their own interests, with their own men. Of course they lean on a class or defend its rights; but this they do above all to defend the rights and to establish the advantages of the people of those who adhere to their party. Politics becomes a profession. Hence the corruption of the parties. *Politics is no longer popular*, say the British. In fact, decent people begin to suspect anything they know about politics. One sees immediately under the equivocal speculation and the oblique end.

Now we must not believe that socialists are different from other men. The same cause always produces the same effects. The split between class and party which explains the political corruption of the bourgeois parties can lead to the same consequences even among the socialists. It certainly explains the deviation from the principles. Ostrogorski, speaking of contemporary English society, notes that in parallel with the separation of society from politics, we see the divorce of politics from principles. Neither today's liberal party has anything in

common with the old liberal party, nor do today's conservatives seem to belong to the same political faction as the old conservatives. It is perfectly idle to deplore an inevitable fact. The custom of democracy was to lead to this result. Now if the defection to the principles is manifest and indisputable for the liberal and conservative parties, why should it be considered impossible for the socialist parties? The case of Millerand, that of the very recent ministerialism of the Italian socialists, the oldest and funniest one of Thiébaud (Geneva), show quite clearly whether or not the betrayal of principles among the socialists is only a fantastic danger. The essential thing is to find that rule of conduct that makes this result impossible or less fearful.

The political action of the proletariat must move from the union, a real unit representing the entire life of the worker. Moreover, every day the trade union movement becomes more and more imbued with a socialist spirit; every day the workers' movement identifies itself with the dissolution movement of capitalist society. Socialism therefore spontaneously returns, outside of every program and every design, to the professional organizations and to the economic movement, from where theory had it before, as an object of study, cultured and separated. If the single trade union of the single trade seems to represent the exclusive interests of the workers of the trade; the hypothetical federation of trade unions, the Chamber of Labor, the Unions of the Chambers of Labor, national and international, perfectly represent the general interests of the workers' movement. Alongside them, the Socialist Party, considered distinct from real workers' organizations, gradually becomes a superfluity. Originally, when we were faced with an uncultivated, selfish working class, overwhelmed by misery, the Socialist Party was the symbol of all proletarian hopes. But now that the workers are starting to go it alone, they need to resign themselves to becoming the simple electoral organization of the workers' unions, which recognize that it is opportune to participate in electoral struggles.

Socialism needs to become proletarian again. It must abandon the habit of democratic politics, to resume attitudes suggested by the same needs of working life. It must renounce the use of those weapons, which do not appear exclusively as workers. Certainly the working class would commit a great mistake by renouncing the use of democratic institutions (suffrage, elective assemblies) and completely withdrawing from the political life of the other classes. But he would be making an equal mistake if in their exclusive handling he saw the possibility of final liberation. It is the conditions of life that determine the choice of the means to reach a certain end. The working class spontaneously found this means in the general strike, a notion that does not replace or eliminate the use of the other resolute means that history suggests, and that the general strike either conditions, strengthens or strengthens, like the cases of the recent Russian revolution demonstrate. The general strike is a genuinely working-class concept, which the working class has drawn from the experience of its own life and in which it has glimpsed, from the very beginning, the specific form of the proletarian revolution and of the subsequent conquests that lead to the social revolution. Traditional socialist democracy does not regard this notion with undue sympathy. At the most, it would like to make it a subsidiary and subordinate instrument of parliamentary action, in cases in which this is not sufficiently effective or is not enough in itself. According to our notion, on the other hand, parliamentary action has pure and simple purposes of control and propaganda, even an enabling office, if you like, but it is in itself powerless to produce a change. Instead, it is up to the general strike to prepare the external conditions within which it becomes possible to practically realize a mutation that economic development and class struggle tend to recognize. The starting point of the change is always the development of the economy of the past, largely removed from the thoughtful design of men. But the force that consecrates it is the general strike, that is, the power and the union maturity, which it translates or even indicates only.

Will the new worker-socialism (revolutionary syndicalism) triumph over the traditional notions of the old socialist democracy? It is difficult to predict the outcome of the present discussions. In Latin countries it is very likely that revolutionary syndicalism will eventually prevail. And it can also be foreseen that if the English working classes will one day evolve towards socialism, they will spontaneously adopt the syndicalist notion, towards which the individualistic inclination, the sense of freedom and the state aversion of the race to which they belong seem to predispose them. The Germanic countries - still too far removed from the parliamentary forms of public life - must by necessity stick to their parliamentary tradition, which in their countries is an aspiration towards progress which has not yet been achieved. But whatever the start of things will be, it is certain that, in the face of worker-socialism, the old socialist democracy will have to come closer and closer to the type of a democratic party based largely on workers' bases and therefore destined sooner or later to enter into conflict with liberation movement of the proletariat.

CHAPTER NINE

The Present Crisis of the Italian Socialist Party

Nothing is better to describe the present crisis of the Italian Socialist Party than the words that King and Okey, the two English historians who have dealt with the political events of our country, dedicate to this party: "Orthodox socialism is about to disappear in the limbo of dead theories; the class struggle is interpreted to mean nothing more than a general historical trend; the bronze law has vanished and the (Italian) socialists admit the possibility of improving the condition of the working classes under a capitalist system". The two historians indicated now consider the office of the Italian Socialist Party as not unlike that of any other monarchical and parliamentary party: "the socialists become the forward wing of a large parliamentary party, and stand as champions of constitutional and a very practical political and social program". According to these two unscrupulous observers, the Italian Socialist Party defends the existing constitutional law on the political ground, that is, the monarchical-parliamentary organization of the state, and on the social ground some "very practical" reforms. Given the value that the British give to the word "practical", this means that according to the two English historians, the Italian socialist party does not even remotely threaten the political and social organization that operates of the Italian state; that is, as a conservative party. This observation is very serious, but it can be documented in several senses and ways.

It can be said, in fact, that not only the result of the Socialist Party's action in Italian politics has not led to any notable advantage for democracy and the working classes, but that the desire to produce any. A little earlier the *Social Critic* published a very serious and symptomatic article by Ivanoe Bonomi on the program of a government democracy. It is not the case to test that article from the point of view of the action it

recommends to the Socialist Party but rather of the consequences that would be derived from that action. Bonomi would like the socialists, in agreement with the other democratic factions, to oppose the government program with another government program. He speaks of various and desirable things which should take place; but the essential thing is to see what means he proposes to implement them. Now he does not want the expenses for the army to be touched in the name of general disarmament "because democracy cannot and must not exhaust itself in a vaporous and distant dream". He applauds all those designs which are intended to give us "a stronger and less troublesome army for those who are called to compose it". And since the endowment of other public services is already so scarce that no one could seriously think about reducing it, it is not known where Bonomi would like to take the means necessary to carry out the anticipated reforms. Perhaps from the conversion of the rent, which, yes and no, when attempted on a large scale would give the budget a relief of forty or fifty million? Except that even from this source Bonomi asks very little, since for the conversion of the rent "the monetary conditions of the major foreign markets are not already very favorable". So what should the whole great social reform consist of? Bonomi himself replies: "the immediate purpose of democracy must be a tax reform that mitigates the major inequalities between the various social classes and prepares the ground for a more complex and deeper reform". As for immediate politics, democracy will have two aims: the consolidation of the European armed peace and the preservation of the secular character of the state.

If the intentions and resolutions are used to somewhat advance the predictable concessions of reality, this article by Bonomi, to which Turati fully adhered in the next issue, and which responds to the average conscience of the reformist part, is the most beautiful document of the conservative soul. of the prevailing part of Italian socialism. The policy that it proposes to the socialist party as an immediate program of government, namely: armed peace, the maintenance of the secular character

of the state, the tax reform, coincides admirably with the program of all the Italian conservative parties. In so far as it implies on the part of the proletariat the recognition of monarchical forms - an indispensable condition for safeguarding current conservative interests - it takes on an Italian character of conservative defense, of which another party would be able to boast in vain. And the strange thing is not that a socialist writes about such things, but that the prevailing fraction of the party makes them their own and that some shrewd politicians pretend to raise wonders because in Italy there are still some socialists who rebel against this propaganda of abdication and suicide.

It should also be added that Bonomi's article is perfectly in tune with the Italian socialist mentality. The Italian Socialist Party has never seriously threatened the political and social constitution of the country. During the obstructionist campaign he always posed as a defender of legality, against the other classes that denied it. Not even in that period of time when direct Crown action was more visible, did he dare to discuss it openly. The same insistence with which a very isolated cry by Bissolati is magnified, during the obstructionist campaign, is proof of the party's lack of republican awareness. After Adua, he settled for Crispi's head; after 1898, he forgave the decorator of the Milan torturers. Recent the pits of 1998, he groaned about the king's broken life. He raged in the moral persecution of anarchists. He repudiated any act of collective violence. The hunger riots in Sicily stole incredible judgments from the socialists. He leaned towards the dynastic alliance with the central empires. Turati justified the intervention of the army in popular conflicts, and, therefore, the use of weapons. This precisely on the occasion of a massacre of the people. For all the ills of the people, the Party knew only one remedy: to elect an ever increasing number of Socialist deputies!

He had no sense of proletarian solidarity. He let regionalistic hatred flourish. He turned all his attention to developing a sense of immediate profit in the proletariat. Distant ideals were always mocked as utopias. I have always considered

the Italian Socialist Party as an anomalous case of international socialism. But it is a case worthy of study.

Some research the recent aspects and causes of the crisis of the Italian socialist party; and those find in the phenomenon of the two or more tendencies that would divide it today, these in the attitude towards power. The truth is much deeper. The phenomena first of ministerialism, then of semi-monarchism, are the latest efflorescence of more hidden causes. In themselves considered, they are of little importance. All parties are more or less crossed by various tendencies and a transiently favorable attitude towards a government can also be an expedient of revolutionary politics, when those who take it are not conservatives who, in order to better succeed, bury the tail under the wool of a Phrygian cap. In this matter, the quality of men decides a lot. An energetic and frigid little woman can emerge triumphantly from certain positions, but for certain others it happens like the virgin Mary after the ninth month of the angelic visitation. The crisis of the Italian socialist party derives in large part from that choice of human material that it was able to make for its own organization; by the shape it has given to this organization; by the ends he followed in his action. Everything else came by itself.

We have already seen, in the previous chapter, how the Socialist Party is, in almost all the countries of the world, under the weight of the threat deriving from the dissociation of the strictly economic labor movement from the political movement. The formation of a socialist political organism alongside the corporate organization of the working class almost always leads to the result that the economic movement is put in the tow of the political movement. The moral leadership of the proletariat passes to the socialist party, which claims to represent its interests. But the Socialist Party is not a class organism, that is, of people subjected to the same general economic conditions, but, instead, a true moral organism, that is, of people united by an ideological bond, regardless of their class position. The ideal bond is naturally designed to serve certain class interests;

therefore, whatever the class origin of the components of a party, it is always assumed that they will sacrifice their original class interests to the ideals which they have undertaken to defend. But to what extent the class instinct, primitive education, the permanent social interests that subsist for every man and do so in solidarity with the class in which he was born or lives, even independently of his political views, can be trampled on. , it is something that you will never know how to decide. In theory, there is the danger that, since the socialist party may be dominated by men of the bourgeois side, the entire workers' movement may be put at the service of interests radically opposed to those of the working class.

The imbalance that is felt almost everywhere in the socialist movement derives, in my view, precisely from this fact. In almost all civilized countries, the leadership of the socialist movement is assumed by men of bourgeois origin and customs. They rarely find that they are confusing what suits them, considered as men who have already arrived from the bourgeois class, or eager to arrive, with the needs of the proletariat. Their good faith is often indisputable, but is good faith enough when it comes to interests and instincts? For a class of men which derives its livelihood from the trade in its intellectual products and yet from the literary success it can obtain among the wealthy classes - hitherto the main consumers of intellectual products - the preaching of general class disarmament and of the progress achieved thanks to the peaceful use of administrative devices it is quite obvious. It remains to be seen whether the same can be said of a class, such as the proletariat, which proposes to take away the means of production from the bourgeoisie and to break the state machinery. The greatest difficulty arises when these men have succeeded in dominating the workers' movement and let the demands of their class position appear as the wishes of the workers. This is the greatest danger of the position and which casts more than a shadow on the future victory of the proletariat. Could this victory not be that of the special class organized into a socialist party and which, while it does not correspond entirely to

the working class, might want to constitute a new domination over the workers, for the exploitation of the political machine? Outside of the personal loyalty of these men, what guarantee do we have that such a danger is altogether chimerical?

From a similar point of view, the case of the Italian Socialist Party can be said to be extremely instructive. An analysis of the professions of the thirty-three socialist deputies shows that among them there are eleven lawyers, six professors and teachers, three publicists, three businessmen and only three small industrialists or workers. The social composition of the parliamentary group can be considered as a successful *échantillon* of the composition of the whole party. In various parts of Italy, the sections are almost all composed of bourgeois; where, as in the great cities of northern Italy, the worker element prevails, the directive function of the movement always belongs to bourgeois elements. The same occurs in the Leagues and in the Chambers of Labor. The editors of the party newspapers, the secretaries of the socialist sections, those of the leagues, of the professional newspapers and of the Chambers of Labor, all belong to the class of the capitalist bourgeoisie, to that large class of true intellectual proletarians who vegetate in our country. It goes without saying that the Socialist Party and the workers' organizations have provided several hundred people, rejected by the jobs of the bourgeoisie, with the means to live. In this respect, the Socialist Party can be defined as a skilful organization of the moral and material interests of the professional class. And hence also various degenerative phenomena.

Regardless of the class of people, fundamentally always worthy of some consideration, and in which truly heroic characters of passionate organizers and disinterested philanthropists are found, who draws no economic advantage from the organization of the party, providing a sum of work and of truly incredible sacrifices; then there is the one who expects satisfactions of a higher kind from the party. It is understood that a party in which the professional class or the intellectual

proletariat predominates must have great sympathy. for public offices and for "electoral" revolutions. One of the most common phenomena of Italian socialism is the young graduate who retires to the village, makes a certain "propaganda", gets himself designated "candidate" of the party, patiently waits for administrative or political elections, until he manages to win. . All these people have a very mediocre interest in the advent of the collectivist society, in which they have a particularly oratory and electoral faith. The sense of legalism, which is so grotesquely exquisite in the Italian Socialist Party, is the natural outflow of the prevailing of electoral interests over any other kind of interest, even of class, in the countless aspirants to public office, with which Italian socialism delights.

Contempt for the "rioters", the denigration of the "anarchoids", the slander of the republicans "prejudicevoli", are by no means a borrowed sentiment. But, finally, a party constituted in such and such a way, in some sense based on the speculation of certain human vanities, must be inclined to a peaceful, evolutionary, positivistic and legalitarian interpretation of social life, like not even a Catholic party, or Ernesto's friends. Teodoro Moneta, the apostle of peace sometimes naive, but always disinterested.

But it is no wonder that the Italian Socialist Party has never been passionate about anything other than electoral issues. Before the current dispute over "tendencies" (an attempt to offer the Italian socialists a much more substantial subject of discussion than the eternal electoral dispute) emerged, the socialists of our country scrambled in almost all their congresses to establish how to compete in the elections. The only reason for a passionate discussion was to see if it was worthwhile to rely on other democratic elements or if it was necessary to go it alone. The distinction between "transigent" and "intransigent" had as its sole substratum the electoral attitude, and in truth showed very little respect to the revolutionary sentiment of those who took sides on one side or the other. I, for example, have always been in favor of conditional agreements with the republicans and the

radicals, before the latter became the worst monarchists in Parliament. In the final analysis, many were intransigent for the very positivistic reason that thus the socialist candidacies multiplied and the cloth in which vanities could cut their own model grew. These differences of transigent and intransigent, of a purely electoral nature, and however of little value as a symptom of the revolutionary passion of their adherents, exercised a deleterious influence in the dispute of "tendencies" which, in the last analysis, had as its subject the attitude in the face of monarchical institutions and the way of conceiving the struggle against the capitalist system. The party, completely absorbed in its electoral calculations, found itself disoriented and transformed itself into a magnificent tower of Babel. Basically it has never been able to understand that elections are a transitory moment in the life of a country and that all the activity of a party cannot be absorbed in them.

To these reasons of organic malaise, dependent on its own composition, others were added, dependent on its origins. Italy does not have, like France, Germany and England, socialist traditions on which to model itself. Vincenzo Russo, Filippo Buonarrotti, Carlo Pisacane have not exerted any influence on the Italian mentality. Of mass movements, one has to go back to Bakunine to find them; but there were disordered agitations of the plebs in Naples and in the Romagna, sectarian agitations, revolting and inconclusive, which certainly could not constitute the starting point of a tradition. As for the *Workers' Party*, its life was too troubled, short and local, for its case to provide general teachings, and it participated too much in the future defects of the Italian socialist organization to teach us anything truly instructive. Tradition is now a great force. It offers the possibility of permanent confrontations and, therefore, of continuous corrections. In France the errors of Jaures certainly do not escape the watchful and suspicious eye. of the proletarian mass, which from Babeuf to the Paris Commune and its main actors finds in the history of socialism and proletarian agitation in their own country infinite examples and practical models of a precise

and rigorous proletarian and socialist action. The blunders of the Jaures exercise little influence on the fate of the socialist movement in France, where organized parties count so little due to the ingenious interest of the French mass in the political affairs of their own country. For example, the workers' unions and the labor exchange in France have completely escaped the pestiferous influence of jauressism.

In Italy, socialism was largely the fruit of the personal preaching of Mr. Prampolini or Mr. Turati or Mr. Morgari and so on. Above all it had three centers of diffusion: Emilia, Piedmont and Lombardy. In Emilia and Piedmont, the nature of the propagandists and the economic environment, where small ownership prevails and the traditions of quiet living are rooted in it, forced socialism to assume a philanthropic and sentimental character so little in keeping with its traditions. Emilian socialism makes the milk of the collectivist paradise, substituted for the vision of the Catholic paradise. Prampolini periodically absolved the capitalists of enjoying the privileges of their economic situation with the table placed at the head of his newspaper. This, of course, reconciled to him the sympathies of the educated and wealthy classes, although later, the contagion of electoral vanity, having also taken over bourgeois opponents, earned him little credit for having preached a socialism all flowers and perfumes for his own opponents. . The success of Piedmontese socialism, although later, was more rapid, precisely because of the accentuation of the same evangelical character. It coincides with the astonishing conversion of the courteous captain to socialism. But Edmondo De Amicis conceived socialism as military life. He put on the same pair of lenses as the more tender rosy one that he had already used to study the barracks when he first crossed the title page of a socialist pamphlet. What was socialism for him? Who can tell? Peace, brotherhood, harmony, the *l'embrassade générale*, the workers crowned with laurels, the capitalists who are willing to work as simple laborers, the king who takes the initiative of collectivism, the reconstituted family; Watteau, Arcadia and Bellini, who dance

around humanity redeemed by hatred and framed by love. What a rise from the sarcastic-revolutionary socialism of Karl Marx!

Other influences, and these beneficial ones, developed from the propaganda that centered Milan. Incalculable advantages came to socialism from the personal action of Turati and that group of his friends, who gathered around the Social Criticism, such that only the very recent conduct of Turati can - and not always - make us forget. The rigorous anti-capitalist and anti-bourgeois socialism of the *Communist Manifesto* was spread and defended, with an eloquence matched only by the apparent firmness of conviction, by Turati and his friends, and served to contain the sentimental spread of socialism to De Amicis or Prampolini. This socialism, which it conquered with the rigor of its logical apparatus, soon attracted the sympathy of scholars and was due to it that formidable recruitment of intellectual forces which seemed to put Italian socialism above socialism of any other nationality. But a sad fate presided over the fate of socialism in our country.

The Italian socialist party went through two periods of persecution, but one common to all the unofficial fractions of political parties, and therefore also to the clerical, as in 1898, and the other almost exclusively endured by the socialist party, that of 1894- 95. In general, the importance of this persecution has been greatly exaggerated and this is explained by the partisan aims that the exaggeration itself allowed to reach. The so-called reaction of 1894 had a very limited scope. As soon as a few Neapolitan and Genoese socialists, two or three from Reggio Emilia and someone from Sicily, more victims of local reprisals than ideal persecutions, were sentenced to forced home. The "persecution" against the socialists was reduced to assigning some fifty to the border, a ridiculous punishment, without importance, without suffering value, foolishly invented on purpose to favor socialist propaganda. There is no need to talk about the usual seizures of newspapers, because they still continue today. In that response, as in 1898, the real reaction was borne by the anarchists, against whom every fiercer rigor of the law was used,

and quite conclusively because the anarchist organizations have never again recovered from that storm. The anarchists, yes, who were the real victims of the Italian reaction and not the dozens of socialists sent on holiday to the border! But the fictitious reaction of 1894, the more serious one of 1898, although the latter of much shorter duration, exerted a fatal influence on Italian socialism and instead of tempering it, depressed it. The many bourgeois who came to the Socialist Party, and who did not like to have harassment for the fact of their own ideas, accentuated the *electionistic and legalitarian* character of the party. The anarchists did not even find among the socialists the indulgence of pity for the ferocious persecutions endured in a manly manner. Nor, moreover, could these have been successful had it not been the lack of interest that the Socialist Party took to the anarchist victims of the reaction. Political action was increasingly reduced to electoral action. The sections of the Party were indifferently called *electoral circles*. All party activity was reduced to swelling the electoral lists. Every hint of violent solutions was scorned as "forty-eightism", and that healthy rhetoric of enthusiasm, without which parties degenerate into conventicles of *serious children*, was severely put on the index. The propaganda of *immediate profit* began among the masses. The quintessence of philosophical bourgeoisism, I mean the positivistic doctrine, was preached as the rationale for socialism. Many times all this seemed to be done only to make it easier for the police and judicial persecutions, but it was basically the revelation of a state of conscience.

Nocque to the Italian Socialist Party the rush that made, after the accession of Ferri, many scholars of anthropological and criminal sciences, who brought you the habit of academic chatter on the eternal law of Evolution, transformed from prosaic and empirically detectable rhythm of things in Demiurge of reality. Academic pantofolism, which does not want to spoil its digestions with the turmoil of the street, entrusted everything to "natural evolution". Prof. Zerboglio, who is so revolutionary that he even condemns divorce. Ferri's first pamphlet: "*Socialism and*

Positive Science" aroused a real sense of wonder among the German socialists. Kautsky, vividly criticizing him in the *Neue Zeit*, could not understand how a socialist could write that the question: monarchy or republic had no interest in socialists, and that the use of violence belonged to social pathology. Kautsky pointed out to Ferri that the execution of Louis XVI was most likely worth a little more than an electoral victory! Nor could he send him the thesis that social democracy should refrain from attacks on people. He then subjected the whole doctrinal part of the work to very harsh criticism.

But the main fact that has determined the present moral crisis of the Italian Socialist Party must certainly be found in the special environment in which Italian socialism celebrated its triumphs. In fact, it should not be forgotten that the Italian Socialist Party was born among the camps. A vague Virgilian sense of life adheres to it by birthright. Furthermore, the peasants, mostly small owners, as Marx wrote in 18 Brumaire, have an instinctive need for state assistance. They feel the malaise in which they find themselves and turn around for help. Those who do not fall prey to sectarian and ecclesiastical organizations run to the Socialist Party. What drives them, what animates them, is a need for immediate relief. They do not know well, nor do they wish to know what socialism is, but they know that socialism is the novelty, the transformation, the improvement. The same demands of propaganda concur in confirming in them the concept of the closest and most certain advantages. On the other hand, their state of mind reacts to that of the Party leaders and leads them more and more to seek ways of immediate and feasible remedies. During the crisis caused by the *ministerialism* of the socialist deputies it was stated that the peasant organizations demanded from those deputies the continuation of their ministerialism. And even taking into account the fact that many times the sentiment of the salaried and quietist secretaries of the Leagues has been mistaken for the sentiment of the mass, it cannot be denied that, in general, it is very probable that the peasants did not look favorably upon a

tactic of hostility to the government, while the little that there was to hope depended on the government's favor.

Anyone who wants to understand the present crisis of the Italian Socialist Party must turn his attention to these various moments in his life. Attempts have been made to believe that the dispute over tendencies hinges on the academy of the revolutionaries attacked, as we said, on formulas, and on the reformists, who denied them. It's false. I am on my own the least orthodox of the socialists in the whole world and I do not attach myself to formulas of any kind. *That dispute was just the incongruous and twisted echo of the contrast felt by many between the logic of the general doctrines of socialism and the bleak practical opportunism of the Italian socialist party.*

Given this character of the Party, it is quite natural to happen, as King and Okey narrate that "the directors and organizers of the nascent industries of the north are often sympathetic socialists."

In Milan it is well known that men of the Jewish High Bank are the main or exclusive shareholders of a local socialist organ. This newspaper follows a tactic in all its strikes which systematically causes it to be whistled by the striking workers. But even outside Milan, the capitalist classes no longer view the spread of socialism with an unfavorable eye. The conservative newspapers are full of courtesies for Turatian socialism. Biancheri, as Speaker of the Chamber, and one of the oldest foxes of Italian moderation, encouraged Prampolini in the middle of the Chamber to continue his propaganda. He decorated it with the title of "apostle of peace", and the socialist newspapers went off in a soup of jujube! And to say that some define socialism as the theory of the struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie! Other than peace! Later the Prime Minister Hon. Giolitti, defined the Hon. Turati an "eminent parliamentarian", and defended socialism against the anarchists and the "prejudice" of the republic. All this farce finds its explanation in what King and Okey observe: "the Italian socialist party has practically lost every revolutionary color". The unscrupulous observers. they are

there to see it, regardless of the fact that the reform socialists deny, interested in maintaining the misunderstanding about the practical scope of their ideas in order to succeed better in their intentions. But it is always an investigation of some interest to establish what these intentions are determinedly and whether by chance the reformist socialists do not propose to the party to take the precise path of moderates and conservatives in Italy.

Bonomi, to whom we must return often when we want to know the ideas of the reformists, because among his cronies he is the only one who expresses himself with a certain sincerity, wrote a symptomatic article on the two tendencies in democracy in the *Social Criticism*. That article reminded me of the kind of controversy that, for example, the Bonghi conducted against democracy. Il Bonghi - that pigtail that everyone knows - used to accuse radical and republican democracy of "little modernity", because he still gave some importance to the question of political forms and made a foreign policy based on the considerations of internal politics. These are ideas that the Bonghi has diluted countless times in his political chronicles of the *New Anthology*. Now here is this glorious Bonomi of finding him, printing the same reproach to the Italian democracy as an amazing novelty. He notes that within each fraction of the so-called popular parties, there is a direct tendency to deny the traditional politics of democracy and to approach the new life ... recommended by Ruggero Bonghi. For Bonomi it would be a great victory for "modernity" if democracy were to pursue a foreign policy no longer motivated by the desire to harmonize the internal movement of democracy with the external one, but "a" realistic "policy, that is, practically, based on interests of the ruling classes and the country's political institutions. Likewise, that kind of gross tax policy which consists in asking for relief should be stopped. But what relief from Egypt! We are a modern people and we have to spend a lot. Distribute the load differently. Great luck! And the game of repercussions? And then let's get it over with preaching disarmament. In the current political conditions of Europe this cannot be done. But, in heaven's name, what kind

of new democracy is this? Were the moderate and conservative parties not enough to preach and realize these views? Now we don't need to examine them in themselves; but we can very well observe that the triumph of this new democracy would lead the socialist party and the other democratic parties to act precisely like the parliaments over which the honors preside. Sonnino and Di Rudini. Poor Ruggero Bonghi, who would have predicted this triumph!

The real moral crisis of the Italian Socialist Party therefore does not lie in the fact that the members of the parliamentary group voted in favor of the Zanardelli ministry, but in the possibility that similar views are written and declared in the name of any fraction of Italian socialism. The ministerialism of the parliamentary group was rather the pretext around which a way of resisting the continuous degeneration of the Party was organized. This would have continued to make its way, even if the episode of the Zanardelli ministry had not occurred. The episode of *ministerialism* assumed an air of gravity, because with the entry of the Party into the spheres of official politics, of which it became an element, the possibility of the moral decadence of its men was accentuated. Furthermore, the ministerial attitude of the Group allowed many underground and silent views to burst out brazenly in the light of day. The vague monarchism of so many socialists, against which they had tried in vain to head off with republican agendas presented at successive congresses and voted on not only reluctantly, but with an intonation that deprived them of all importance, was advancing resolutely in the Party. Articles were published in the *Avanti* and in the *Social Criticism* which, while making a half and listless bow to a theoretical republicanism, proposed that they work in good agreement with the monarchical institutions. The gay expression of "prejudicial" was invented to disqualify - who knows why? - the republican ideals. To those of us who to open a way to the expression of their thoughts - now fiercely forbidden in the official organs of the Party, of which, as of *Avanti!* and of the *Critics*, we were old and hitherto appreciated collaborators -

they collaborated in republican newspapers, the cross was shouted over them. Of course it was more comfortable for us to be silent at all.

Ministerialism was a solemn fiasco. Under no ministry, as under that Zanardelli, the workers were more frequently treated with rifle bullets, without the socialist deputies being moved beyond the usual and yawning interpellation, which is dedicated to every donkey treated too cruelly by the donkey. Military expenses, for the reduction of which the Socialist Parliamentary Group had first engaged in the path of slippery concessions, were increased with the greatest skill, and the fools of the Extreme did not notice it until later. We don't even talk about social legislation. Had it been conspicuous at all, how poor and crumpled it was, it would have demonstrated the extreme skill of conservative parties in offering illusory rewards for the practical transactions of democracy, so little and doubtful value has social legislation in countries of low wages and active competition between workers. - Of the famous "consolidated freedom" it would be permissible to speak only in a vaudeville. The indulgence of the socialists for monarchical institutions is such that they call respect for that famous Albertine Statute of 1848 "consolidated freedom" which even to monarchists and ministers of the monarchy such as Francesco Crispi seemed a pact necessarily to be changed on the day when the Italian people, even under monarchical institutions, felt the need for freedom.

It would be difficult to trace the responsibility for this state of affairs to one or the other socialist. The blame, as we have seen, is rather due to the circumstances that originated and among which the Italian Socialist Party later took place. But, at present, the fraction that consequently and coherently raises that view that we have seen to have been shy and shameful a bit common in the whole party, can no longer, judged from a strictly critical point of view, consider itself socialist. . If it is still a radical and democratic faction they should see the same radicals and democrats. It is certain that if the Italian Socialist Party often oscillated between conceptions and tendencies that were

incongruous with the theoretical purpose it proposed and with its current historical function, the presentiment of the purposes and the logic of its political position have succeeded in keeping it from blindly following Turati and his friends. The brazen courage with which they, from a conditioned ministerialism, came to the theory of class cooperation and then to the recognition of monarchical institutions, was like the head of Medusa proposed before the party. There is in the soul of every man a certain fundamental honesty, for which, at the cost of the greatest conceptions, he ends up revolting at certain extremes. And the Italian socialists have often had to ask themselves if to do the things that Turati and his friends want it was necessary to form a socialist party or if it was not enough to work in agreement with generic democracy or even with conservative parties.

The socialism of the Italian reformists is something very easily definable. It consists in supporting the need for the working classes to work together with the other classes of society and with the liberal and democratic parties for the achievement of certain reforms. Such reforms are made to result in the transformation of the largest number of public services into municipal and state industries and in promoting broad, but undefined social legislation. Workers must actively participate in public life to qualify for the management of collective affairs. With the most absolute respect for existing legality, they must try to prevail in elective assemblies to implement other but not indicated reforms. Finally, the goal of all these efforts is collectivism, relegated to a very distant era, and to be put into effect by the increasing nationalization and communalization of industries. In the present, therefore, the Socialist Party should act as a constitutional governing party. For the future, then, it should propose to implement a kind of state collectivism respectful of the positions acquired and not at all in contrast with the interests of the capitalists. But for those who take the point of view of the *difalchi* and the deductions that each party provides in the account, compiling a program, there is no doubt that this distant

vision of collectivism is a simple political device to put workers in the tow of conservative parties.

The reaction against this trend was initiated by the few nuclei (I will mention that of Naples by way of honor). who had long ago warned of the dangers in which the Socialist Party was proceeding by the constant prevailing among it of the most watered down and undulating elements. Ferri and his friends followed, who from the contingent case of electoral intransigence were led to the sound conception of the class struggle excluding the systematic collaboration of the proletariat with the dominant classes and parties. And although in the pamphlet on the "Revolutionary Method" which we have repeatedly criticized, there are numerous doctrinal points, in our opinion, erroneous, and a certain sympathy of the author is confirmed for the mechanical state solutions of a kind of collectivism à la Schaeffle and the legalitarian point of view is more than ever highlighted and defended, that pamphlet must not be denied a great pedagogical efficacy for having declared one of the most massive errors among which the reformist tactics drag on and for having organized a vigorous resistance to the spread of the Turatian trend. On the contrary, it must be assumed that if Ferri had not placed his emerging personality at the service of the current opposing Turati, whom Ferri himself calls revolutionary very improperly, and had not given her all the credit that comes from her indisputable personal qualities, this would be it was soon submerged and the opposition nuclei would end up like the "young" in the German Socialist Democracy. This was certainly one of the greatest services that Ferri rendered to international socialism.

But it is difficult to predict the fate that the future reserves for this tendency of opposition to the legal-legal and semi-monarchical slippers of the so-called reformists. I don't think it will soon prevail in the party. Given the precedents of the same party and its more recent history, given the prevalence of the social and political positions occupied by the reformists, and above all the fact that they have succeeded in dominating the

labor movement in the country, it is very likely that their attempt to transform the socialist party in a *constitutional reform party* has some chance of success before it. As, practically, the representation of the party is assumed by the Parliamentary Group, the action of the Parliamentary Group is declared the action of the whole party and in the Parliamentary Group the Turatian tactics can count, with some slight concession of form, on the vote of the almost totality of the Group itself, and as it is very likely that future elections will strengthen the more temperate and constitutionalist elements in the Parliamentary Group, I believe that Turati's experiment - long before it is declared contrary to the interests and will of the Party - will reach its end. confessed effective participation in power. Most likely this event is not very far away. It is certain that if the future elections give, as is easily predictable, a liberal-democratic majority, the reformist socialists will have to participate in power.

The reformist meteor will not disappear from the horizon, unless the participation in power of the reformists has completely discredited them. Power consumes everywhere, but especially in Italy where it often means the use of not very respectable expedients and the satisfaction of appetites whose greed invariably turns the conscience of the country. Nor does the flesh of which the reformists are formed seem of such quality that it can withstand the temptations arising from the use of power. Time will tell.

Until that time, the anti-capitalist and revolutionary factions of the Socialist Party will necessarily have to perform a critical function almost exclusively to the detriment of their reformist comrades. Experience shows that the revolutionary factions do not perform a beneficial function except by pruning the illusions that can arise from the malicious exploitation of revolutionary ideals. It is a thankless task, but one of supreme utility. The conditions of Italy do not allow the existence of a colossal socialist party, like the one we have today. Ours is a country of incipient industrial development and the groups of workers disciplined by capitalism and yet reducible to the

consciousness and action of socialism still do not reach the importance of legions. Right now, Italian socialism is forced to the unnatural office of educator and organizer of the common people, with serious damage to the character of the movement. Therefore the anti-bourgeois and anti-monarchist opposition nuclei that are now arising within the party prepare the favorable ground for international socialism for a modest workers' party fully aware of its revolutionary ideals.

Moreover, many things prepare the triumph of revolutionary logic over the reformist utopia in our country. To use only hints, it is enough just to remember that the crisis of reformism, which broke out in parallel in all the parties of democracy, immediately followed that awakening of general economic activity, which began in Italy with 1898. Republicans and socialists have remained, as if stunned. Therefore it was not true that the obstacle of the dominant political forms opposed the achievement of economic transformations and the prosperity of the country, and it was also clear that the conditions of the proletariat became less desperate for the simple development of the country's economy! That softness and flaccidity of the parties, which seems traditional in our Italy, found its full justification in the development of things. Therefore those who were already inclined to opportunism and to the transaction did not need other stimuli and encouragement to follow the paths of the heart. Anyway, said the thief, if I don't steal, he steals my neighbor.

But this momentary prosperity is too much made up of contradictory elements to be lasting in Italy. It rests largely on the exploitation of customs artifice and on the division of Italy into a region that produces and another that consumes. It is conditioned by the agricultural misery of Italy, which is forced to provide itself with huge masses of grain from abroad and to pay them, with customs duties, a sum much greater than the natural one, so that the wealth of the landowners grows, but expenses of the country's increasingly acute misery. It is based on the continued maintenance of a European peace, which, inasmuch as

it is due to the mutual fear of the nations, imposes the showy armaments and therefore resolves itself in conditions of hardship. He supposes that the economic conditions of the great industrial countries are invariable, while the signs of a general crisis are already starting from England. The sense of the instability of this position is so advanced in the ruling classes that they strive to overcome all oppositions and instead of enjoying the advantages of the moment alone they prefer to give a part of it to the subject classes. The wisest politicians of the bourgeoisie try to form the great insurance company of the present Italian constitution around the monarchy. And yet the most amiable and provocative smiles are for the socialist side, as the supposed interpreter of the interests of the proletariat. The compromise of the proletariat in the common official interests would allow the civil bureaucracy, the military organization, the court coteries, the public suppliers, the army of proteges and protectionists, the High Bank pickpockets and their parliamentary pimps to continue undisturbed. the great national plunder. Hence their keen interest in the success of the reformist farce. The day the audience whistled, the impresario would see the box in danger. But this momentary prosperity is too much made up of contradictory elements to be lasting in Italy. It rests largely on the exploitation of customs artifice and on the division of Italy into a region that produces and another that consumes. It is conditioned by the agricultural misery of Italy, which is forced to provide itself with huge masses of grain from abroad and to pay them, with customs duties, a sum much greater than the natural one, so that the wealth of the landowners grows, but expenses of the country's increasingly acute misery. It is based on the continued maintenance of a European peace, which, inasmuch as it is due to the mutual fear of the nations, imposes the showy armaments and therefore resolves itself in conditions of hardship. He supposes that the economic conditions of the great industrial countries are invariable, while the signs of a general crisis are already starting from England. The sense of the instability of this position is so advanced in the ruling classes that

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The proletariat, or at least those small nuclei of its which have already come to the awareness of the class struggle, must prevent the success of the Macchiavellian attempt, which the unconsciousness of so many seems to pave the way for. It must refuse to appear in the enormous masquerade, reserving the part of the jaunty boy who in due course, with some cheerful mischief, throws disorder into the ranks and forces very colorful ladies and respectable gentlemen to shelter in a door and give up the fun. It doesn't matter if in this confusion some socialist queues remain in the middle, indeed the show would gain comedy.

CONCLUSION

What Separates and What Unites

We have been concerned in the preceding pages with establishing the historical value of the reform movement within socialism. We have had to assign to this movement the value of a not at all desperate attempt on the part of the ruling classes to seize socialism. The tools of this political ambush organized by the ruling classes are most of the time unaware of the purpose to which they lend their work. The strangeness of their position derives in large part from the logical nature of the reformist error.

At this point we should undertake the examination of the reformist action, no longer considered an outflow of a political thought acting by design, or of a provisional decadence of the pure socialist spirit, but in itself, as an action aimed at modifying certain certain aspects. of social life. We could thus examine the problem of the extent to which reformist action converges with that of the Socialist Party, albeit in the ways of manifestation diverging from it, because the first is action developed through and with the consent of the State, and the second against it; and the extent to which it explicitly diverges from it. It is useful here, instead of concluding what has already been said, to summarize in some formulas what is proper of one and the other and the reasons for the necessary dissent between one and the other. This will take the place of demonstrations, which must be omitted here by now.

Where does the irreducibility of socialism to reformism and the need to separate the action of the first from the action of the second come from?

Socialism is the fact of the substitution of the economic company of the associated workers and carrying out all the acts in which the process of economic life consists, from saving, to the transformation of savings into means of production and from

means of production into products and means of direct consumption. , and thus the acts of material production as well as the intellectual ones of directing, associating and administering; to the company managed in the capitalist manner, in which there is a wage-earner, owner of the means of production and responsible for production, and a number of salaried employees, responsible only for the performance of a specific work, for a determined space of time.

This in the economic company (factory, rural farm, mining or transport company, etc.). Outside the factory, socialism wants to realize the same ideal and yet free society from any authoritarian bond, replacing the coercive and hierarchical relations of political organization with the spontaneous agreement of free comrades. But the realization of this ideal outside the factory implies that the corresponding relations have already been established in the factory, since the existence of classes with opposite interests in the field of production makes the political and hierarchical organization of society outside the factory inevitable, that is, the existence of the State .

The replacement of the socialist factory for the capitalist factory cannot be accomplished step by step, but suddenly. Any intermediate degree (for example: the co-ownership of the workers and the capitalist) is a different thing and yet equally distant from the socialist factory. The monarchy does not become a republic due to successive attenuations of the royal power which engages in the elective orders of the supreme office. This passage is a true *hyatus*, implying a solution of continuity, that is, revolution. The socialist revolution, consisting in the replacement of the workers associated with the capitalist, can only be accomplished by eliminating socially, and from a certain point onwards, the capitalist class.

This revolution, however, is not arbitrary, that is, it cannot be accomplished by design as long as it pleases. It supposes that two conditions are fulfilled: I. the inability of the capitalist system to further govern production; II. and conversely, the same ability in the working class. And these are necessary and sufficient

conditions for the revolution to take place. The Socialist Party today acts in the sense of promoting in the working classes the development of the technical and intellectual qualities indispensable for the management of production, and of accelerating the process of dissolution of capitalism.

As the aim of this revolution must be regarded as essentially economic, only one class can be its effective instrument, that is, the wage working class. The Socialist Party therefore rejects the adhesion of those intermediate classes (small owners, professionals, employees), who do not have a class interest to prevail in the movement, try to use this movement to implement purposes or in contrast to those of socialism. or separate from these.

Right now the Socialist Party is limited to preparing the objective and subjective conditions that make it possible to replace the economic enterprise of the workers associated with the capitalist enterprise.

The action of the reformist party on the one hand is another thing and on the other leads to the negation of the socialist ideal.

The reformist action finds its reason for life in what every social being (political or economic institution) takes place in a particular environment. Proudhon has long since distinguished the economic environment from the actual company. Following his indications, Sorel, by posing the problem of possible reforms to be introduced in the economic organism, has achieved remarkable results. But Proudhon's theory lends itself to various applications even in the strictly political field.

The fundamental economic and political organism is constituted by the fundamental economic or political relationship existing between men. In the factory it is the wage system, with relative monopoly of the means of production, in the state the relationship between the political superior and the citizens, that is, the form of the state.

Proudhon called the economic environment the system of trade, taxation, the hygienic government of men, the system of

technology, etc. We can call the system of current legislation a political environment, it is therefore: electorate, local administration, freedom, etc.

One of the fundamental social organisms is to be independent of their environment. The capitalist factory is the same in Russia, England and Japan, while the economic legislation and technical uses governing the industrial life of the three countries are different. In the three countries there is wage-earning and individual monopolistic ownership of the means of production; but the trade regime, the regime of technical forces and personal hygiene are in the three different countries.

Thus there is a monarchy in Italy, Germany and Russia, but the residual political institutions of the three countries are infinitely different. This shows that social organisms are completely independent from the environment in which they take place. The trading regime and the bank regime have no influence on that of the factory. The administrative and political institutions of a country do not alter the fundamental character of the dominant political organism in a country or in an epoch. These conclusions are worthy of being held.

The environment and the social organism can be considered as two points that can be modified with the application of two different forces. Reform is the specific agent that modifies the environment of a political or economic organism. The characteristics of gradual, progressive and cumulative transition are applied to the environment. The monarchy remains, but the regime of the electorate, of the local administration, of public liberties is transformed. Environment and social organism have no relations with each other.

Conversely, the force that modifies the fundamental social organism (the factory or the political institution) is the revolution. The attempt to modify the organism with the transformations of the environment, appeared constantly illusory. We have given various examples in the text.

These premises make it possible to clearly establish the relationship between reformism and socialism.

Reformist action is not socialist action. In fact, it applies to the environment and not to the organism, and does not have the slightest influence on this. But it is generally an advantageous action because it takes place in the sense of promoting greater general well-being. However, there are cases in which reform action can be harmful to the general development of society. It presupposes the agreement and the advantage of all classes, equally interested in the implementation of the reforms. The working class, while convinced of the character of the reformist action, collaborates in its successes and accepts the results, from the point of view of the advantages that affect all social classes and therefore itself.

Between reformist action and revolution there is no relationship of continuity, so that, for example, the latter would come from the accumulation of the results of the latter. The republic does not emanate from infinite modifications of the electorate or public freedoms (political environment) in a country, but from the direct suppression of the fundamental institution (organism). In a certain sense, there is not even a relationship of condition and condition between the two. Historical experience demonstrates (Cromwel's England, Revolutionary France, United States of America, etc.) how, for example, from an absolute monarchy one goes well to a democratic republic. In a preface to the *Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels wrote that it was also possible to pass from present-day Russia to the regime of communism.

The reformist action and the revolutionary action run on two parallels and therefore belong to different parties. In general, as reformist action implies the advantage of all classes in a series of compromises between these same classes, reformist action is specific to democratic parties). And yet reformism is the specific way of seeing democratic or radical parties, even when they consider themselves socialist. But it is the outflow of a very bad evolutionary and positive metaphysics - the metaphysics of

vulgarity! - consider radical and socialist action - some imbecile even takes into account the republican one - as dependent on each other, according to an order of logical and historical succession. Democratic reformism and socialist revolutionism are not in any *necessary* relation to each other.

But the reformist action - for all the reasons developed in this book - immediately appears to the ruling classes as a means of preventing the revolutionary action of the subject classes. And, however, the proof of substituting it for the latter is experienced. The psychological illusion of gradual transitions would determine the renunciation of revolutionary action. Now just as reformist action serves only to change the environment, leaving the organism intact, its prevailing over revolutionary action promises the perpetuity of the present domination to the ruling classes.

The Socialist Party, on the other hand, applies its forces to the fundamental organism of the capitalist factory and prepares the substitution elements (objective and objective) of the socialist society in the workers' union. His revolutionary work is in no way influenced as a revolutionary work - by the modifications introduced into the economic environment. Leave this artifice of environmental changes to democracy. For himself he reserves the real revolutionary action, aimed at changing the fundamental organism of the state and of the factory.

An obvious conclusion follows from this. Having sprung up within the Socialist Party and strongly affirmed itself, indeed threatening to prevail, a reformist current, the Socialist Party cannot accept compromises of any kind with it. The reformist action is clearly democratic and popular, insofar as it presupposes the agreement and the advantage of all classes; indeed, this is the essential condition of one's success. Socialist action, on the other hand, is an exclusive class action. The first applies to the environment, the second to the organ, the first implies the gradual transitions, the second the immediate transitions, although not arbitrary.

The present crisis of the Socialist Party does not stem only from the existence of a reformist current. This crisis repeats,

indeed, the origin first from the form of the organization, which has placed the Party, in almost all the countries of Europe, in the hands of a small faction of literate bourgeois or workers forgetful of their class origins. and led to become bourgeois. But the outbreak of the reformist furuncle precipitated the maturation of the crisis itself.

The first duty that is imposed on the Socialist Party of almost all civilized countries is, therefore, a decisive war on the reformist faction. This can do the good of the working classes, but outside the Socialist Party. As long as, within the Socialist Party, it pretends to impose the policy of gradual changes and class compromises, it will force the working class into a policy which necessarily implies - we have seen it - abdication in order to suppress wage workers and class domination. This struggle is expected to be very bitter and much longer than that which led to the separation from anarchist utopianism.